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**COMMENTARY ON THE  
FOUR GOSPELS**

**MARK-LUKE**



# COMMENTARY ON THE FOUR GOSPELS

BY  
DAVID SMITH, M.A., D.D.

*In Three Volumes*

MARK-LUKE

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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO  
ST. MARK

*And He said, It is a light thing that thou  
shouldest be My servant to raise up the tribes of  
Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel:  
I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles,  
that thou mayest be My salvation unto the end  
of the earth.*

THE PROPHET ISAIAH.





## SUMMARY

	PASSAGE	PAGE
OUR LORD'S CALL . . . . .	i. 1-13	5
INAUGURATION OF HIS MINISTRY . . . .	i. 14, 15	9

### I. EARLY DAYS OF POPULARITY

(i. 16-45)

CALL OF FOUR APOSTLES . . . . .	i. 16-20	13
A DEMONIAK IN THE SYNAGOGUE OF CAPERNAUM	i. 21-28	15
FURTHER MIRACLES . . . . .	i. 29-34	17
RETREAT TO THE ISLANDS OF GALILEE . .	i. 35-45	19

### II. JEALOUSY OF THE RULERS

(ii-iii, 6)

CHARGE OF BLASPHEMY . . . . .	ii. 1-12	23
OFFENCE OF LOVING SINNERS . . . . .	ii. 13-17	25
NEGLECT OF FASTING . . . . .	ii. 18-22	27
CHARGE OF SABBATH-BREAKING . . . .	ii. 23-iii. 6	29

### III. CHOICE AND TRAINING OF TWELVE APOSTLES

(iii. 7-vi. 13)

ORDINATION OF THE TWELVE . . . . .	iii. 7-19	33
RENEWED HOSTILITY . . . . .	iii. 20-35	36
TEACHING BY PARABLES . . . . .	iv. 1-34	38
RETREAT ACROSS THE LAKE . . . . .	iv. 35-v. 20	42
JAIRUS' DAUGHTER AND A WOMAN WITH HEMOR- RHAGE . . . . .	v. 21-43	45
VISIT TO NAZARETH AND COMMISSION OF THE TWELVE . . . . .	vi. 1-13	52

### IV. THE PROGRESS OF THE CONFLICT

(vi. 14-viii. 26)

THE EXECUTION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST . . .	vi. 14-29	57
RETREAT ACROSS THE LAKE . . . . .	vi. 30-56	60
CONTROVERSY ON CEREMONIAL ABLUTION .	vii. 1-23	64
RETREAT TO PHŒNICIA . . . . .	vii. 24-31	67
QUEST FOR A RETREAT . . . . .	vii. 32-viii. 26	70

(3)

## SUMMARY

## V. THE END IN SIGHT

(viii. 27-x)

	PASSAGE	PAGE
RETREAT TO CÆSAREA PHILIPPI . . .	viii. 27-ix. 13	77
HEALING OF AN EPILEPTIC BOY . . .	ix. 14-29	81
BACK IN CAPERNAUM . . .	ix. 30-50	85
MINISTRY IN JUDÆA . . .	x.	90

## VI. THE TRAGEDY AND THE FINAL TRIUMPH

(xi-xvi)

ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM . . .	xi. 1-11	101
THE BARREN FIG-TREE . . .	xi. 12-26	103
DISPUTATIONS IN THE TEMPLE-COURT (xi. 27-xii. 37):		
QUESTION OF AUTHORITY . . .	xi. 27-33	111
PARABLE OF THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN . . .	xii. 1-12	112
QUESTION OF TRIBUTE . . .	xii. 13-17	114
QUESTION OF THE RESURRECTION. . .	xii. 18-27	115
QUESTION OF THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT	xii. 28-34	117
DAVID'S SON AND DAVID'S LORD . . .	xii. 35-37	119
DENUNCIATION OF THE SCRIBES . . .	xii. 38-40	120
THE WIDOW'S FARTHING. . .	xii. 41-44	122
DISCOURSE ON THINGS TO COME . . .	xiii.	125
THE TRAITOR'S BARGAIN WITH THE RULERS . . .	xiv. 1-11	129
THE LAST SUPPER . . .	xiv. 12-31	131
GETHSEMANE . . .	xiv. 32-52	135
THE TRIAL:		
1. BEFORE THE JEWISH RULERS . . .	xiv. 53-72	139
2. BEFORE THE ROMAN GOVERNOR . . .	xv. 1-19	141
DEATH AND BURIAL . . .	xv. 20-47	143
THE RESURRECTION . . .	xvi.	147

## OUR LORD'S CALL

### i. 1-13

1 *The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;*

2 *As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.*

3 *The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.*

4 *John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance \*for the remission of sins.*

5 *And there went out unto him all the land of Judæa, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.*

6 *And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey;*

7 *And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.*

8 *I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.*

9 *And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.*

10 *And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens †opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him:*

11 *And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

12 *And immediately the spirit driveth him into the wilderness.*

\* Or, unto.

† Or, cloven, or rent.



13 *And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.*

**O**BERVE the opening verse. The chief authorities have simply: "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ," omitting "the Son of God," which is indeed a needless addition, since, as we have already seen (cf. Mt. iii. 17), "the Son of God" was a Messianic title synonymous with "Christ." Two views have been taken of the purport of the verse. One is that by "the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ" the Evangelist means merely His announcement by His forerunner John the Baptist; and so understood it is linked, as in our Authorised Version, with the ensuing quotation from the prophetic scriptures (vers. 2, 3). But it is better regarded as the title of the book. So the Revised Version takes it, isolating it from the ensuing text and linking the prophetic quotation with ver. 4: "As it is written . . . , John did baptize" or rather "John arose, he who baptized in the wilderness."

The opening verse then is the Evangelist's title of his book; and a very significant title it is. It is not "the beginning of Jesus Christ"; for His appearance as the Saviour promised of old was not His beginning. He was the Eternal Son of God without beginning of days. Nor was it the beginning of His earthly life, since He had already, as St. Matthew and St. Luke relate, dwelt among men for thirty years. It was "the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ," His entrance on His public ministry, the work which had brought Him from His eternal glory and which He had been anticipating all those years of lowly toil in the obscurity of Nazareth. And moreover it was only "the beginning." It is not the whole story that the Evangelist is about to tell; for the Lord's ministry did not cease with His death. It continued after His departure; and now that He is re-enthroned in His eternal glory, He is still the Saviour, "the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever," and His

Gospel is from age to age accomplishing its gracious work.

It is worth remarking that the oldest manuscripts have "it is written in Isaiah the prophet," and "in the prophets" is a later emendation, indicating that the quotation is composite, combining a verse of the prophet Malachi (iii. 1) with another from Isaiah (xl. 3). The explanation of the seeming inaccuracy is that the latter, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness," was the Baptist's own definition of his office (cf. Jo. i. 23), and St. Matthew (iii. 3) and St. Luke (iii. 4-6) both repeat it in introducing him to their readers. St. Mark also repeats it; but remembering how on an occasion which he does not record (cf. Mt. xi. 10; Lk. vii. 27), our Lord had described John in the language of Malachi as "the messenger sent to prepare His way," he blends the two prophecies without staying to distinguish their sources. It may be that he did not distinguish them even in his own mind. For in those days the Scriptures were inconvenient rolls of parchment written by hand. Copies were rare by reason of their costliness, and by reason of their cumbrousness they were difficult to consult. Hence the Jewish fashion was that children were taught the Scriptures by rote (cf. 2 Tim. iii. 15), and when they grew to manhood, they had them by heart and quoted them from memory. This is the reason of the general freedom of the New Testament writers' quotations from the Old Testament and their frequent variations from the original; and if we be disposed to charge our Evangelist here with an inadvertence, we should consider that it was the very fulness of his knowledge of the Scriptures that occasioned it.

In this section St. Mark tells the stories of John's preaching (vers. 2-6), his announcement of the Messiah's imminent advent (vers. 7, 8), our Lord's baptism (vers. 9-11), and His temptation in the wilderness (12, 13); and since we have already studied St. Matthew's fuller narrative thereof (cf. iii-iv. 11), it remains only that we should notice several significant peculiarities of the text before us.

## 8 COMMENTARY ON THE FOUR GOSPELS

Observe, first, the occurrence here (vers. 10, 12) of that characteristic word (cf. Introduction, p. xvii) which is the keynote of the Gospel, occurring in its brief space no fewer than forty-two times. Variouslly rendered in our Version "straightway," "immediately," "forthwith," it prefaces every fresh paragraph, vividly depicting the eagerness of our Lord and His sense of the shortness of His earthly sojourn and the need of haste that He might accomplish His task (cf. Jo. ix. 4). Again, though very concise, the story of the Temptation adds three arresting touches to the picture. (1) Where St. Matthew has (iv. 1) "He was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness," St. Mark has "the Spirit driveth Him" or "casteth Him forth." It is the same word which our Lord employed when He said to the Twelve (Mt. ix. 38): "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that He will *send forth* labourers into His harvest"; and it expresses the urgency of the spiritual impulse which prompted our Lord to seek in solitary communion light and guidance for the path whereto He had been called. (2) It is not the terror of the situation that the Evangelist depicts when he notes that "He was with the wild beasts," but rather its utter solitude. It is like the story of St. Francis of Assisi and the birds. The timid creatures of the untrodden wilderness, "so wild that they were tame," had no fear of the gentle stranger. (3) These were His only visible companions, yet there were others unseen: "the angels ministered unto Him." Was this early experience in His thoughts when afterwards, in the parable of the beggar at the rich man's gate (cf. Lk. xvi. 21, 22), He pictured the dogs, his only earthly helpers, licking his sores and the angels encompassing him unseen and carrying him to Heaven?



## INAUGURATION OF HIS MINISTRY

### i. 14, 15

14 *Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.*

15 *And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*

**O**N the circumstances see exposition of Mt. iv. 12-16. The burthen of our Lord's preaching was not "the Gospel of the Kingdom of God" but, according to the true reading, "the Gospel" or "good tidings of God," which may signify either "God's good tidings," the good tidings which He sent to a sinful world, or "good tidings about God," the revelation of His love and mercy which our Lord brought. And when He announced that "the time (rather "the season" or "crisis") was fulfilled" (cf. Gal. iv. 4), He proclaimed Himself the Messiah, the long promised, long expected Redeemer come to establish "the Kingdom of God" or, as St. Matthew, the Jewish Evangelist always has it, "the Kingdom of Heaven" ("Heaven" being with the later Jews a reverential substitute for the divine name), that reign of righteousness and peace whereof the prophets of old had spoken (cf. Is. xxxii. 1).

In this brief preface the Evangelist presents the programme of his narrative. St. Mark's is at once the simplest and the most dramatic of the Synoptic Gospels; and the reason is that in composing it he had no apologetic or theological purpose in view. St. Matthew, the Jewish Evangelist, had mainly in view, as we have seen, the commendation of our Lord to his unbelieving compatriots as their

promised Messiah, and St. Luke, the Gentile Evangelist, was ever solicitous to display the universality of His grace and His peculiar tenderness for the outcast and sinful; but St. Mark was enamoured of no particular aspect of His ministry, and he has simply unfolded the progress of the sacred drama, exhibiting its movement and development stage after stage to the final *dénouement*. He sets before us in vivid sequence (1) the early days of our Lord's popularity (i. 16-45); (2) the jealous hostility of the rulers (ii-iii. 6); (3) His choice and training of the twelve Apostles to continue His work when He was gone (iii. 7-vi. 13); (4) the progress of the conflict—on the one hand His ever growing popularity and on the other an ever intenser hostility (vi. 14-viii. 26); (5) the end in sight (viii. 27-x); and (6) the tragedy and the final triumph (xi-xvi).

I

EARLY DAYS OF POPULARITY

i. 16-45



## CALL OF FOUR APOSTLES

### i. 16-20

16 *Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.*

17 *And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.*

18 *And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.*

19 *And when he had gone a little farther thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets.*

20 *And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.*

**T**HERE were three reasons for the eager interest which our Lord awakened and the hold which He took upon the minds of the people at the very outset of His earthly ministry. One was His preaching and another His miracles, and the third, superficially less obvious but deeper and more potent, was the wonder of His grace. An example hereof is this story which St. Matthew also records (iv. 18-22) and which has already engaged our consideration. The point which now claims our attention is that these four fishermen were no strangers to Him when He called them to leave their boats and nets and cast in their lot with Him in the prosecution of His ministry. Some three months ago, as St. John records (cf. i. 35-42), they had heard the Baptist's testimony that He was the promised Saviour; and what was it that persuaded them of so large a claim? It was not a miracle, since as yet He had wrought none;



neither was it His preaching, since it was not till His settlement in Galilee that He "began to preach" (cf. Mt. iv. 17). It was the look of His blessed face and the fragrance which breathed from His holy lips as He talked with them. Ever since they had been much in His company, and they had witnessed His first miracle at Cana (cf. Jo. ii. 1-11); and thus the first impression had been deepened and their initial conviction confirmed until now they were ready to obey His call and surrender all for His sake.

## A DEMONIAK IN THE SYNAGOGUE OF CAPERNAUM

### i. 21-28

21 *And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught.*

22 *And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.*

23 *And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,*

24 *Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.*

25 *And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.*

26 *And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.*

27 *And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.*

28 *And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.*

**H**ERE we see the influence at once of His preaching and His miracles. According to the Jewish custom (cf. Mt. iv. 23-25) He was permitted to preach in the synagogues; and He availed Himself of the opportunity on His settlement at Capernaum. Neither St. Mark nor St. Luke has reported this His first sermon, but, as we have seen (cf. preface to exposition of Mt. v-vii), St. Matthew has incorporated much of it in "the Sermon on the Mount";

and all three remark on the impression which it made on the congregation (cf. Mt. vii. 28, 29). What chiefly impressed them was its note of "authority," so unlike the manner of the Rabbis, those slavish traditionalists. "What is this?" they exclaimed according to the true reading. "A novel sort of teaching with authority behind it!" It had a startling effect on one of the congregation—an epileptic or, as he is termed according to the idea of the age (cf. exposition of Mt. viii. 28), "a man with an unclean spirit." The excitement working on his distempered intellect induced a fit, and he "cried out" or rather "screamed 'A-a-ah!'" ; for thus and not "let us alone" should the Greek word—omitted here by the best authorities but given by St. Luke (iv. 34)—be rendered. "Why art Thou troubling us, Jesus the Nazarene?" he remonstrated, speaking in name of himself and the evil spirit wherewith he believed himself possessed. Our Lord dealt with the case after His accustomed fashion, humouring the hallucination and mastering it by His calm authority. "Hold thy peace," literally "be muzzled," said He, addressing the supposed demon as though it were a furious beast, "and come out of him." A sore struggle and a loud cry, and the man was healed.

## FURTHER MIRACLES

i. 29-34

29 *And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.*

30 *But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell him of her.*

31 *And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.*

32 *And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils.*

33 *And all the city was gathered together at the door.*

34 *And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils \*to speak, because they knew him.*

**I**N the story of the healing of the epileptic we find exemplified all the three secrets of our Lord's immediate popularity—the wonder of His teaching, the wonder of His miraculous power, and the wonder of His strong and gracious personality; for it was this last, as the Evangelists observe, that gave His teaching its grasp on His hearers' minds and inspired the sufferer with that faith, that self-surrendering trust without which no miracle is possible (cf. Mt. xiii. 58). And its operation is illustrated also in these further miracles which He wrought on that memorable Sabbath, and which we have already considered in our study

\* Or, to say that they knew him.

of St. Matthew's narrative (viii. 14-17). For it was their knowledge of His grace that prompted Simon's household to tell Him of the trouble which had visited their home, and it was the manifestation thereof which they had witnessed in the synagogue that brought the townsfolk to Him that evening with their sick.



## RETREAT TO THE INLANDS OF GALILEE

### i. 35-45

35 *And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.*

36 *And Simon and they that were with him followed after him.*

37 *And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee.*

38 *And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth.*

39 *And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils.*

40 *And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.*

41 *And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.*

42 *And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.*

43 *And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away;*

44 *And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.*

45 *But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.*

**S**T. MATTHEW records the miracle of the healing of the leper (viii. 1-4), and we have already studied his narrative of it; but St. Mark has illumined it by placing it in

its historical setting. He tells us how, though weary with that Sabbath's labours, our Lord left His couch ere daybreak and sought a retreat, probably on the hillside behind the town, and there, as He was ever wont in seasons of perplexity, took counsel with God in prayer. What was it that perplexed Him? It was nothing else than the popularity which He had won. This the Evangelist indicates when he tells how the demoniacs had hailed Him as the Christ, the Messiah (ver. 34; cf. Lk. iv. 41). And indeed He was the Messiah, but already He was finding, as He found more and more, how mistaken was that ascription on the lips of the multitude, holding as they did the prevailing ideal of the Messiah as a national deliverer (cf. Mt. iv. 8-10). Their acclamation was an unspiritual and mischievous enthusiasm, and He would fain have repressed it. He retired to His solitude that in communion with God He might determine what He should do; and when Simon and the other disciples tracked Him thither, He told them His resolution. He would quit Capernaum for a season and preach in the inlands of Galilee. It was an extensive and protracted ministry, and it was abruptly terminated by the excitement which the miracle occasioned. "He could no more openly enter into a city, but was without in lonely places" (cf. Lk. v. 16).

## II

### JEALOUSY OF THE RULERS

ii-iii. 6



## CHARGE OF BLASPHEMY

### ii. 1-12

1 *And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house.*

2 *And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.*

3 *And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.*

4 *And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.*

5 *When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.*

6 *But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts,*

7 *Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?*

8 *And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?*

9 *Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?*

10 *But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)*

11 *I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.*

12 *And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.*



THE situation at Capernaum had developed during our Lord's absence. His popularity had excited the jealousy and His teaching the suspicion of the local rulers, and on their report the Sanhedrin had deputed representatives to co-operate with them in the exercise of a vigilant surveillance (cf. iii. 22; Lk. v. 17). Their presence in the town would excite popular curiosity regarding the issue, and it is no wonder that on His return "after some days" or rather "in the course of days" (a phrase which denotes a considerable interval) "the rumour spread 'He is home!'" Presently He made a public appearance. Plainly it was in the synagogue; for it is written that "many were gathered together" or "congregated," the verb whence "synagogue" is derived, and nowhere else could so large a crowd have assembled, nor would the Rabbis have been present anywhere else. Probably it was a week-day service (cf. exposition of Mt. iv. 23-25); for had it been the Sabbath, they would have charged Him not only with blasphemy but with Sabbath-breaking (cf. iii. 2). Mindful of His former works and expectant of official interference, a huge crowd assembled. The synagogue was packed and the door besieged when four men arrived carrying a paralytic on a litter. Entrance was impossible, but they would not be balked. They ascended by the stairway in the rear of the building to the flat roof and, familiar with the interior, prised up the flagstones and lowered the litter in front of the preacher's platform. It was a reckless proceeding, but it bespoke their faith in the Healer and their solicitude for their afflicted friend; and they had their reward. See here the exposition of St. Matthew's narrative (ix. 1-8).

## OFFENCE OF LOVING SINNERS

### ii. 13-17

13 *And he went forth again by the sea side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them.*

14 *And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphæus sitting \*at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.*

15 *And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him.*

16 *And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?*

17 *When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

**F**OILED in their charge of blasphemy, "the Scribes and Pharisees" or rather, according to the true reading, "the Scribes of the Pharisees," the learned order of the Pharisaic party, the guardians and interpreters of the Sacred Law, quickly found a fresh offence in His gracious dealings with sinners. See the exposition of the story as related by St. Matthew (ix. 1-8). It was no new offence; for, since Capernaum was the frontier town of Galilee on that busy trade-route "the Way of the Sea," it had a custom-house with a large staff of publicans or taxgatherers (cf. Mt. iv. 12-16). Already those despised outcasts had been attracted by His gracious message; and, excluded from the fellowship of the synagogue, they had been accustomed to follow Him

\* Or, *at the place where the custom was received.*

and listen on the outskirts of the crowd as He taught in the open. This St. Mark explains when he says that "they were many, and they followed Him" or more precisely "were wont to follow Him." There is, however, another and well attested reading which construes the passage thus: "for they were many. And the Scribes of the Pharisees followed Him," meaning that when they saw Him on His way with His disciples to Levi's house, they dogged Him thither to spy upon Him in the hope of finding occasion against Him. Observe that here (ver. 17) as in St. Matthew's narrative (ix. 13) "to repentance" is lacking in the best manuscripts. It is borrowed by copyists from St. Luke's text (v. 32), where it is added to express the truth implied in our Lord's argument that He called sinners not because He made light of their sin but that He might deliver them from it. It was not mere sinners that He called but penitent sinners. It is indeed a useful homiletic addition, but like most additions to our Lord's sayings it limits His intention. For it is not merely to repentance that He calls sinners but to the peace and gladness of a full salvation.

## NEGLECT OF FASTING

### ii. 18-22

18 *And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?*

19 *And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.*

20 *But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.*

21 *No man also seweth a piece of \*new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse.*

22 *And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles.*

SEE exposition of Mt. ix. 14-17. Our Lord's baffled enemies here renew the attack. First for the sake of his Gentile readers the Evangelist explains the situation which afforded them an opportunity. "John's disciples and the Pharisees," he says according to the authentic text, "used to fast," literally "were fasting" or "were fasters," sticklers for the usage. Not only had our Lord poured scorn on the Pharisees' ostentatious addiction thereto (cf. Mt. vi. 16-18) but He neither practised it Himself nor required it of His disciples; and here the Scribes found their opportunity. Observe the craftiness of their procedure. "They come,

\*Or, *raw*, or *unwrought*.

and say unto Him" says St. Mark, but, as we have learned by reference to the other Evangelists, they did not come in person. They employed the Baptist's disciples as their emissaries, thinking that His sympathy with those earnest young souls would betray Him into an unguarded pronouncement which they might turn to His discomfiture.



## CHARGE OF SABBATH-BREAKING

### ii. 23—iii. 6

23 *And it came to pass, that he went through the corn fields on the sabbath day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn.*

24 *And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?*

25 *And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him?*

26 *How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him?*

27 *And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath:*

28 *Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.*

1 *And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand.*

2 *And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him.*

3 *And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, \*Stand forth.*

4 *And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.*

5 *And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the †hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.*

\* Gr. *Arise, stand forth in the midst.*

† Or, *blindness.*

*6 And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.*

**H**ERE on two occasions the jealous of our Lord's enemies finds a fourth charge against Him—the capital charge of Sabbath-breaking. See the exposition of St. Matthew's narrative (xii. 1-14). St. Mark's narrative is distinguished here by that characteristic vividness which accredits the ancient tradition that his Gospel is a record of what he had heard from the lips of his master, the warm and eager Apostle Peter. Observe, for example, his report of the angry challenge of the Pharisees (ver. 24). "See," they cried according to the proper rendering, "what they are doing!— a thing which is not allowable." And how vividly he portrays their jealous vigilance, their eagerness to catch Him in fault, when he writes (iii. 2) that "they were watching Him, that they might accuse Him"! And see his picture of our Lord "looking round upon them with anger" or rather "wrath," sweeping an indignant glance round the circle of hard, malignant faces, "being grieved for the hardness" or rather "the callousness of their heart." It is remarkable that nowhere else in the Gospels is "wrath" ascribed to our Lord, and in all the New Testament only once again (Rev. vi. 16), where we read of "the wrath of the Lamb." It seems a very contradiction in terms; but what wrath is comparable to the resentment of wounded, outraged love, wearied out and turned to indignant scorn?

The priest (not "High Priest") whom David had to do with was not Abiathar but Ahimelech (cf. 1 Sam. xxi. 1), the son of Abiathar (cf. 2 Sam. viii. 17). There is, however, no error in the phrase, peculiar to St. Mark, "in the days of Abiathar the High Priest" (ver. 26). For just as events at Rome were dated as happening when so and so was consul, so were they among the Jews as happening when so and so was High Priest (cf. Lk. iii. 2); and Abiathar was High Priest when his son Ahimelech was priest at Nob.

### III

## CHOICE AND TRAINING OF TWELVE APOSTLES

iii. 7-vi. 13



## ORDINATION OF THE TWELVE

### iii. 7-19

7 *But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judæa,*

8 *And from Jerusalem, and from Idumæa, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.*

9 *And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him.*

10 *For he had healed many; insomuch that they \*pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues.*

11 *And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.*

12 *And he straitly charged them that they should not make him known.*

13 *And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him.*

14 *And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,*

15 *And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils:*

16 *And Simon he surnamed Peter;*

17 *And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder:*

18 *And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphæus, and Thadæus, and Simon the Canaanite,*

19 *And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him: and they went †into an house.*

\* Or, rushed.      † Or, home.

**D**ESPITE the hostility of the rulers the tide of our Lord's popularity ran ever stronger, provoking their resentment the more. His fame had spread all over the land and beyond it to the heathen cities of Tyre and Sidon in the north; and while the Pharisees were plotting with the Herodians for His destruction, He was beset by an eager multitude from near and far. Whenever He appeared abroad, they thronged about Him as He walked by the Lake, seeking the touch of His healing hand and acclaiming Him "the Son of God," that is, the Messiah (cf. Mt. iii. 17). Aware how false and mischievous was their conception of the Messiah and His work, He shrank from their enthusiasm, and He directed His fisher disciples to have in constant readiness "a small ship" or rather "a little boat," not merely that when the crowd pressed about Him He might get into it and address them thence (cf. iv. 1; Lk. v. 3), but that on occasion He might escape to the other side of the Lake (cf. iv. 35, 36).

In this embarrassing situation He read a clear presage of the inevitable issue. He must make provision for the continuance of His work when He was gone by ordaining and training a band of His disciples. Already He had twelve fit men in view, and now He would consecrate them to the high office. It was a momentous step, and He would not take it without holding counsel with God. He withdrew at nightfall, not "to a mountain," but "to the mountain," the uplands behind the town; and there in His accustomed retreat He passed the whole night in prayer (cf. Lk. vi. 12). It appears that He did not go alone. Doubtless on this as on other solemn occasions (cf. v. 37, ix. 2, xiv. 33) His companions were Peter, James, and John, ever His trusted intimates; and in the morning He despatched them to the town to summon nine others of His disciples. On "these twelve" see exposition of Mt. x. 2-4. He "callesth unto Him whom He Himself would" (R.V.), taking no counsel with man since He had already taken counsel with God.



"This scripture," says Bunyan, "made me faint and fear, yet it kindled fire in my soul. That which made me fear was this—lest Christ should have no liking to me, for he called 'whom he would.' But oh, the glory that I saw in that condition did still so enrage my heart that I could seldom read of any that Christ did call but I presently wished, Would that I had been in their clothes; would I had been born Peter; would I had been born John; or, would I had been by and have heard him when he called them! how would I have cried, O Lord, call me also! But oh, I feared he would not call me."

The twelve whom He thus called unto Him He "ordained," literally "made"—the word which in the Greek Version of the Old Testament is used of "making priests" (cf. 1 Ki. xii. 31) and of the "advancement of Moses and Aaron" (1 Sam. xii. 6). The office to which he advanced them was threefold: (1) He made them His constant comrades, requiring them all, as Simon and Andrew, James and John, had already done (cf. i. 16–20), to leave their worldly employments and "be with Him." (2) He authorised them to work miracles of healing, and even as His miracles were wrought in His Father's name (cf. Jo. x. 25, xiv. 10; Mt. xii. 28; Lk. xi. 20), so theirs were wrought in His (cf. ix. 38, 39; Lk. x. 17; Ac. iii. 6, 16). (3) Presently, when they were sufficiently instructed, He employed them as His coadjutors, sending them here and there to preach His Gospel and thus preparing them for the responsibility which would devolve upon them after His departure. We learn from St. Matthew and St. Luke that when He had thus ordained them, He discoursed to them of the ministry entrusted to them (cf. preface to exposition of Mt. v–vii); and then, weary and needing rest, "He cometh home" (R.V. marg.).

## RENEWED HOSTILITY

iii. 20-35

20 *And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread.*

21 *And when his \*friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.*

22 *And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.*

23 *And he called them unto him, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan?*

24 *And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.*

25 *And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.*

26 *And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end.*

27 *No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.*

28 *Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme:*

29 *But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation:*

30 *Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.*

31 *There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him.*

32 *And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee.*

\* Or, kinsmen.

33 *And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren?*

34 *And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!*

35 *For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.*

ON getting home to Capernaum our Lord found Himself not only confronted still by the inveterate enmity of the malignant and crafty emissaries of the Sanhedrin but beset by a more grievous embarrassment—the coarse misjudgment of His kinsfolk. See exposition of Mt. xii. 22–37, 46–50, but observe here further a significant addition of our Evangelist—that pregnant phrase wherewith our Lord confirms His solemn condemnation of the obduracy which had imputed His gracious miracles to black art. “Whosoever,” He says, “shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of” not “eternal damnation” but “an eternal sin.” “In danger of” is the same phrase which He employs in Mt. v. 21, 22, and which, as we have seen, means rather “in the grip of.” Thus we perceive His meaning here. The Greek word for “forgiveness” properly signifies “remission” or “letting go,” and the idea is that sin is a monster which grips its victim and holds him fast unless he cry for deliverance. Crying for deliverance is repentance; and if one has so hardened his heart that he is no longer capable of repentance, then he can never be “let go”: he is “in the grip of an eternal sin.” “If,” says Henry Drummond, “every Godward aspiration of the soul has been allowed to become extinct, and every inlet that was open to heaven to be choked, and every talent for religious love and trust to have been persistently neglected and ignored, where are the faculties to come from that would even find the faintest relish in such things as God and heaven give?”

## TEACHING BY PARABLES

### iv. I-34

1 *And he began again to teach by the sea side: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.*

2 *And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine,*

3 *Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow:*

4 *And it came to pass as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.*

5 *And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth:*

6 *But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.*

7 *And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.*

8 *And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred.*

9 *And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

10 *And when he was alone, they that were about him with the twelve asked of him the parable.*

11 *And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but unto them that are without all these things are done in parables:*

12 *That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.*

13 *And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?*

14 *The sower soweth the word.*

15 *And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.*

16 *And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness;*

17 *And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.*

18 *And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word.*

19 *And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.*

20 *And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.*

21 *And he said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a \*bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick?*

22 *For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad.*

23 *If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.*

24 *And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given.*

25 *For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.*

26 *And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground;*

27 *And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.*

28 *For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.*

29 *But when the fruit is †brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.*

\*The word in the original signifieth a less measure, as Matt. v. 15.

† Or, ripe.



30 *And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?*

31 *It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is so sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth:*

32 *But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.*

33 *And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it.*

34 *But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.*

**H**ENCEFORWARD our Lord's supreme concern was the instruction of the Twelve; and this, as the Evangelist is careful to explain (vers. 33, 34), is the reason why He now adopts the parabolic method in discoursing to the multitude. See exposition of Mt. xiii. 10-17. We have already studied St. Matthew's report (xiii. 1-52) of the parable of the Sower and the lesser parables concerning the Kingdom of Heaven which he groups with it; and it only remains for us to consider one short but significant parable of the Kingdom which St. Mark adds here—that of the gradual growth of the seed (vers. 26-29). It is an admonition of the Twelve against discouragement in the prosecution of their ministry, particularly on two scores: (1) The lack of visible results. When the husbandman has sown his seed, "casting it upon the earth," he has done his part. It is God's to "give the increase," and He surely does whether the husbandman wake or sleep. "The net," said the Greek proverb, "catches while the fisherman sleeps." And thus, it is written (Ps. cxxvii. 2), "it is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so He giveth to His beloved in sleep" (R.V. marg.). Sow the seed, cast the net; and with quiet confidence leave the result to God. (2) The slowness of the Kingdom's advancement. Even so is it, says our Lord, in the natural order. How slowly the harvest matures! It is a gradual



process—"first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear." This is the thought expressed by that frequent phrase of the Old Testament—"the long suffering of the Lord"—*patiens quia æternus*, unresting yet unhasting in the accomplishment of His invincible purposes. And here as so often our Lord anticipates the truth which modern science proclaims. For what is the idea of this parable but the law of evolution? "It is little less than marvellous," writes a modern master, "the way in which the words of Jesus fit in with the forms of thought which are to-day current. They are life, generation, survival of the fit, perishing of the unfit, tree and fruit, multiplication by cell growth as yeast, operation by chemical contact as salt, dying of the lonely seed to produce much fruit, imposition of a higher form of life upon a lower by being born from above, grafting a new scion upon a wild stock, the phenomena of plant growth from the seed through the blade, the ear, and the matured grain, and, finally, the attainment of an individual life which has an eternal quality." Had the Apostles laid this parable well to heart, it would have saved them and the Church in after days from much disquietude. It would, for example, have precluded that fond expectation of the Lord's immediate return which so tried the faith of the early believers as the years passed and their hope remained unfulfilled (cf. 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4).

## RETREAT ACROSS THE LAKE

iv. 35-v. 20

35 *And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side.*

36 *And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships.*

37 *And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.*

38 *And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?*

39 *And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.*

40 *And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?*

41 *And they feared exceedingly and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?*

1 *And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.*

2 *And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,*

3 *Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:*

4 *Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him.*

5 *And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones.*

6 *But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him,*

7 *And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.*

8 *For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.*

9 *And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many.*

10 *And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.*

11 *Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding.*

12 *And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.*

13 *And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea.*

14 *And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done.*

15 *And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.*

16 *And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine.*

17 *And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts.*

18 *And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him.*

19 *Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.*

20 *And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.*

**S**EE exposition of Mt. viii. 23-34. It was not merely that He might escape from the popular enthusiasm and the hostility of the rulers that our Lord crossed over to the

solitude of the eastern shore of the Lake, but that He might be alone with the Twelve and continue without distraction the business of their instruction. St. Mark's is here the fullest of the synoptic narratives, and among its significant additions these are especially noteworthy: (1) Though it was night, there were "other boats" (R.V.) on the Lake (ver. 36)—fishing boats attending their nets. Their crews were "the men" who marvelled at the miracle (cf. Mt. viii. 27). (2) Our Lord was "in the stern, asleep on a pillow" or, as the Revised Version has it, "the cushion." Both renderings are alike misleading. The word means properly a "pillow," literally "cushion for the head"; but it was employed as a nautical term signifying a "rower's thwart," which was usually padded with leather. Here it denotes simply the seat in the stern of the boat where our Lord sat while the disciples rowed. It was no luxurious couch but a wooden bench, and it shows how weary He was after a long day of controversy and teaching that He fell asleep on it. (3) The dispossessed demoniac published what the Lord had done for him "in Decapolis." And what was Decapolis? Signifying "the ten cities," it was not properly a geographical term. It was a confederacy of cities, originally ten in number, which leagued together for the defence of their commerce, especially against Bedawin depredation. They were dispersed over a wide area from Damascus in the north to Philadelphia in the south, an extensive circuit including Ituræa, Trachonitis, Gaulanitis, Batanæa, Auranitis, and Gilead. The significant fact here is that the population was mainly heathen, descendants of the Greek settlers of Alexander the Great; and thus the dispossessed demoniac was our Lord's first "Apostle of the Gentiles."

## JAIRUS' DAUGHTER AND A WOMAN WITH HEMORRHAGE

V. 21-43

21 *And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him: and he was nigh unto the sea.*

22 *And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jaïrus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet,*

23 *And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.*

24 *And Jesus went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him.*

25 *And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years,*

26 *And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse,*

27 *When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment.*

28 *For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.*

29 *And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague.*

30 *And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?*

31 *And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?*

32 *And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing.*

33 *But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was*



*done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.*

34 *And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole in thy plague.*

35 *While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?*

36 *As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe.*

37 *And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.*

38 *And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly.*

39 *And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.*

40 *And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.*

41 *And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.*

42 *And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment.*

43 *And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.*

**D**ISAPPOINTED in His hope of finding seclusion on the eastern shore, our Lord re-embarks with His disciples and steers homeward. The people espied the boat approaching and they thronged down to the harbour to receive Him. Among them came a distinguished personage—one of the rulers of the synagogue named Jāirus, the Greek form of the old Hebrew name Jair (cf. Num. xxxii. 41; Dt. iii. 14; Jud. x. 3). His order was bitterly hostile to our Lord, but trouble had visited his home, and in his sore need he turned to the Divine Helper (cf. exposition of



Mt. ix. 18-26). His only child (cf. Lk. viii. 42), a little maiden twelve years of age, was dying, and since the physicians could do nothing, he had bethought himself of Jesus. Most likely he was one of those Elders who had interceded with Him on the good Centurion's behalf (cf. Lk. vii. 1-10), and remembering what He had done then, he hoped that He might do as much for himself now. Every moment was precious; for though the Lord had healed many sick folk, He had never yet raised any from the dead, and unless He came betimes, it would, Jairus thought, be too late. To ensure His coming he sent no messenger but, leaving the couch of his dying child, himself hastened in quest of Him. "My little daughter," he implored with a break in his voice, "is extremely ill. . . . Do come and lay Thy hands on her, that she may be saved and live."

Without a word the Lord went with him, attended by the curious crowd. The jostling would fret the impatient ruler, and his heart would sink when an incident occurred which stayed their progress. In the crowd there was a woman afflicted with hemorrhage of twelve years' standing, as all the three Evangelists (cf. Mt. ix. 20; Lk. viii. 43) remark, pointing the coincidence between the duration of her malady and the child's age. It had drained not only her strength but her purse, as the Evangelist observes with a touch of sarcasm on the physicians of his age, which one approves on reading in Pliny's *Natural History* that their prescriptions for the malady in question included poulticing with fresh ass's dung and drinking goat's urine. She was traditionally named Veronica; and Eusebius, the ecclesiastical chronicler, tells us that she belonged to Cæsarea Philippi, and in his day, early in the fourth century, there was an old house in the town which was pointed out as hers and which had a monument at its gate—a stone pedestal bearing the brazen image of a woman kneeling with outstretched hands before a man wearing a mantle and extending his hand toward her, while a strange sort of herb which

healed all manner of diseases grew at his feet and reached up to the tassel of his mantle. It was known as Veronica's memorial of the mercy which the Lord had shown her. Nor indeed is the story incredible. The woman was certainly a Gentile, since a Jewess so afflicted durst not have been abroad spreading the contagion of her uncleanness (cf. Lev. xv. 19-33); and St. Mark has already told us (cf. iii. 8) that the fame of our Lord had attracted strangers from Tyre and Sidon, Phœnician cities more remote than Cæsarea Philippi.

Restrained at once by reluctance to divulge her malady and by the doubt whether a Jewish prophet would have to do with a Gentile, she thought to steal a cure. Pushing through the crowd till she got close behind Him, she "touched," rather "grasped His garment" or, as the other Evangelists have it more precisely (cf. Mt. ix. 20; Lk. viii. 44), "the hem" or rather "tassel of His garment," one of the four tassels which garnished the corners of a Jew's mantle (cf. exposition of Mt. xxiii. 5). Instantly, superstitious as may have been her notion that there was healing in mere physical contact with Him, the true faith which inspired it had its reward. For He had felt her nervous clutch and, distinguishing it from the jostling of the crowd, had recognised it as a suppliant's appeal and responded to it. He felt the thrill of sympathy or, as the Evangelist has it in the cruder phraseology of his day, He "perceived in Himself that the power which flowed from Him had gone forth." Wherefore should He not have suffered her to steal away without subjecting her to the exposure which she dreaded? It was that He had a better blessing for her than the healing of her hemorrhage. "Daughter," said He, "thy faith hath" nor merely "made thee whole" but "saved thee." The Greek verb meant both. Sin is to the soul what disease is to the body, and the Saviour is the soul's Physician.

All the while Jairo had been fretting at the delay, and just then a message was brought him that his child was

dead: "Why troublest thou the Master any further?" or rather, the verb being a late Greek colloquialism, "Why weary the Teacher by bringing Him farther?" Our Lord, according to the best attested reading, "overheard it" and quietly bade him have no fear and keep on trusting. Then He proceeded toward the house. The crowd would have pressed in after Him, but He checked their unmannerly curiosity, and by way of setting them an example left His disciples too outside in the street, except His three special intimates, Peter, James, and John. Thus accompanied He passed through the gateway and found the house in an uproar. Unseemly as it appears to us nowadays, it was the fashion then, even among the Jews (cf. 2 Chr. xxxv. 25; Jer. ix. 17, 18; Am. v. 16), to bewail the dead with loud lamentation, and hired mourners were brought in to lead the dirge, a fashion which still prevails in the East (see the chapter on "Cairo and the Plague" in Kinglake's *Eothen*). It was like the Highland coronach. After the battle of the Red Harlaw in the year 1411 "the coronach," says Sir Walter, "was cried in ae day from the mouth o' the Tay to the Buck of the Cabrach, that ye wad hae heard nae other sound but that of lamentation for the great folks that had fa'en fighting against Donald of the Isles." The scene pained our Lord, knowing as He did what death truly is—no hopeless desolation but a falling asleep to wake in the light of God's face. Where His believing people were concerned, He never spoke of "death" but always of "falling asleep"; and the early Christians not merely maintained His language but rejoiced in the truth which it expressed. They called the burial-place "the cemetery," which signifies "the sleeping-place"; and it were well for ourselves if in repeating the word we realised the truth which it enshrines. "The sick-chamber," says the eastern proverb, "is the physician's kingdom"; and He sternly bade the noisy assemblage be silent. "The damsel," said He, "is not dead, but sleepeth." Taking His words literally, they derided Him, and He turned them out of doors, and with the father and mother

and the three He entered the chamber where the child lay "asleep."

There He stood by the couch and took the little hand. There were two languages in Palestine at that period. One was the Common Greek, the *lingua franca* of the Roman Empire, serving as a medium of communication between all its diverse nationalities. At the same time each people retained their vernacular, and the Jews had their Aramaic, as the late Hebrew was called. It was their mother-tongue, and they loved it. It was the language of the home and the heart; and as Scottish folk in moods of tenderness lapse instinctively into the kindly Doric, so rich and sweet, even so was it with the Jews. Aramaic was their language of endearment. And our Lord was a Jew after the flesh. He took the little cold hand and, bending over the bed, spoke caressingly like a mother to her child. *Talitha cumi* said He. It was the phrase of a Jewish mother in waking her child of a morning; and it means properly "Little lamb, rise!" "My wee lammie, get up!"

Observe how the Evangelist interprets the phrase for the benefit of his Gentile readers. His rendering seems doubly inaccurate; but there is always a meaning in the "inaccuracies" of Holy Scripture. (1) *Talitha* signifies "My little lamb," yet he renders it "damsel." And the reason is that there was no Greek equivalent for that tender endearment. It was indeed the fashion with the Greeks to call women after beasts or birds, but with them such names were either playful or contemptuous, and they were always borne by slaves. (2) He adds "I say unto thee," and there is nothing in the original corresponding thereto; but there is a reason for the addition. Our Lord indeed said merely "arise"; but what of the look of kindness in His blessed face and the tone of gracious authority in His voice? St. Mark heard the story from his master Peter who had witnessed the scene, and the addition "I say unto you" is

designed to set it more vividly before the minds of his readers. For "Damsel, I say unto thee" one ancient authority has "Damsel, damsel," thus, as it were, underlining the word. Cf. St. John's reduplication of our Lord's "verily" (Introduction p. xxxviii).



## VISIT TO NAZARETH AND COMMISSION OF THE TWELVE

### vi. 1-13

1 *And he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him.*

2 *And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?*

3 *Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.*

4 *But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.*

5 *And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.*

6 *And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.*

7 *And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits;*

8 *And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no \*money in their purse:*

9 *But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats.*

10 *And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place.*

11 *And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when*

\*The word signifieth a piece of brass money, in value something less than a farthing, Mt. x. 9, but here it is taken in general for money.



*ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom \*and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.*

12 *And they went out, and preached that men should repent.*

13 *And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.*

**S**EE exposition of St. Matthew's account of the visit to Nazareth (xiii. 53-58). Observe how St. Mark expressly affirms that our Lord was not merely in general estimation the son of Joseph the carpenter of Nazareth (cf. Mt. xiii. 55) but had Himself practised that trade. The Jewish custom was that a boy should be set to work at the age of twelve; and it was natural that Jesus should follow the trade of His foster-father. From the silence of the Evangelists regarding him it appears that Joseph presently died, leaving Mary a widow with her younger children; and the burden of maintaining the home thenceforth rested on her First-born Son. A mere lad, He earned their daily bread and His own by daily toil.

Once they sought the Cross of shame  
Where He bore the sinner's blame,  
And they battled for the sepulchre  
Made holy by His name;  
But oh to chance upon  
Some work that He had done,  
The carpenter of Nazareth,  
The Father's only Son!

Were it table, trunk, or stool  
Fashioned by His hand and tool,  
The carpenter of Nazareth  
Who Heaven and earth doth rule,

\* Gr. *or.*

'Twere something just to view  
Handiwork He deigned to do;  
'Twould shed on all our daily tasks  
A glory ever new.

Observe too how His rejection by His former townsfolk only moved Him to a larger and wider ministry. He not merely "marvelled because of their unbelief" but, in accordance with the injunction which He presently gave the Twelve (cf. ver. 11), He carried the Gospel elsewhere, "going round about the villages, teaching." And furthermore He set the Twelve to the work for which He had ordained them and had been preparing them, sending them out two by two on various missions. See exposition of Mt. ix. 35-x. 42.

Peculiar to St. Mark is also the statement that in the prosecution of their missions the Apostles not only preached and cast out devils but "anointed with oil many that were sick." What does it mean? It was held of old that the application of oil, whether simple or mixed with wine (cf. Lk. x. 34), to wounds and all manner of distemperatures was a sovereign specific; and there is a lengthy exposition of its virtues and uses in the twenty-third book of Pliny's *Natural History*. What then have we here but an evidence of the sanity of the Apostles' ministry? While authorising them to work miracles, the Lord warned them against lightly invoking divine interposition. Where natural means sufficed, these must be employed.

IV

THE PROGRESS OF  
THE CONFLICT

vi. 14-viii. 26



## THE EXECUTION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

vi. 14-29

14 *And king Herod heard of him; (for his name was spread abroad:) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.*

15 *Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets.*

16 *But when Herod heard thereof, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead.*

17 *For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her.*

18 *For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.*

19 *There Herodias had \*a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not:*

20 *For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and †observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things and heard him gladly.*

21 *And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee;*

22 *And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee.*

23 *And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom.*

24 *And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist.*

\* Or, an inward grudge.      † Or, kept him, or, saved him.

25 *And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist.*

26 *And the king was exceeding sorry; yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her.*

27 *And immediately the king sent \*an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison,*

28 *And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother.*

29 *And when his disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.*

**S**EE exposition of Mt. xiv. 1-12. St. Mark's narrative is vividly dramatic. Observe his picture of the wretched Tetrarch torn, like Macbeth, this way and that by the dictates of an awakened conscience and the incitements of his wicked wife (ver. 20). The prophetic rebuke which incensed Herodias shook his guilty soul; and he "feared John, and kept him safe"—the word which is used of Mary "keeping in her heart" all the sayings of the Holy Child (Lk. ii. 51). He had repeated interviews with the prisoner; "and when he heard him, he," according to one reading, "did many things" or, according to another, "was much perplexed," "and at his wits' end; and he heard him gladly." The Baptist's message of mercy for guilty sinners was glad tidings for him, and he would have welcomed it had he dared; but Herodias was too much for him. He "did many things" in the way of promises and compromises—anything short of a full confession and an open surrender.

The scene was, as Josephus tells us, the Tetrarch's fine castle of Machærûs to the east of the Dead Sea near the southern frontier of Peræa. John had been immured in that remote fastness rather than at Herod's northern capital of Tiberias, lest a rescue should be attempted by the turbulent

\*Or, one of his guard.



Galileans; and it was there that the supper was held in celebration of his birth-day, meaning probably in Jewish phrase the anniversary of his coronation. It was a state-banquet; and St. Mark indicates its importance when he mentions (ver. 21) that it was attended by "his lords (literally "magnates"), high captains, and chief estates" or rather "the chief men of Galilee," denoting the military and civil dignitaries of the whole Tetrarchy of Galilee and Peræa.

## RETREAT ACROSS THE LAKE

vi. 30-56

30 *And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.*

31 *And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.*

32 *And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.*

33 *And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him.*

34 *And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.*

35 *And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed:*

36 *Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat.*

37 *He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred \*pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?*

38 *He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes.*

39 *And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass.*

40 *And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties.*

41 *And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and*

\* The Roman penny is sevenpence halfpenny; as Mt. xviii. 28.

*gave them to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all.*

*42 And they did all eat, and were filled.*

*43 And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes.*

*44 And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.*

*45 And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before \*unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people.*

*46 And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.*

*47 And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land.*

*48 And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.*

*49 But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out:*

*50 For they all saw him and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.*

*51 And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered.*

*52 For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.*

*53 And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore.*

*54 And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they knew him,*

*55 And ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was.*

*56 And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that*

*\* Or, over against Bethsaida.*

*they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched \*him were made whole.*

SEE exposition of Mt. xiv. 13-36. Our Lord, St. Mark tells us, was grieving over the heavy tidings of the Baptist's death when His Apostles rejoined Him at Capernaum, brimming over with their experiences in the course of their several missions. He had no heart to listen to their talk; nor could He remain at Capernaum, and that for two reasons. One was that He would fain be alone with the Twelve. In the Baptist's death He recognised a premonition of His own (cf. Mt. xvii. 12), and He desired to apprise them of the tragic issue and disclose to them its redemptive significance. And moreover He had perceived in the enthusiasm wherewith the populace had hailed His return a disquieting purpose. "There were many," says the Evangelist (ver. 31), "that were going to and fro, and they had no leisure so much as to eat." Something was afoot, and St. John explains what it was (cf. vi. 4, 15). His numerous miracles, culminating in the marvel of raising Jāirus' child from the dead, had proved to them beyond a doubt that He was indeed the Messiah, the prophetic King of Israel; and impatient of His procrastination in declaring Himself and taking His throne, the more enthusiastic of them had determined to force His hand. It was now close upon the Passover season when Jerusalem would be thronged with worshippers; and their design was to convey Him thither and acclaim Him King. Only by a timely retreat could He checkmate the wild scheme.

According to our text (vers. 33, 34) it appears that when the people in their reluctance to part with Him followed after Him round the head of the Lake, they made such haste that they arrived before Him at the other side, and were there to receive Him when He "came out," that

\* Or, *it*.

is, disembarked. But the manuscripts are here much confused by the misconception of early copyists. The true reading is probably: "they ran together afoot there, and came together at the place"; and the situation is clearly defined by St. John (cf. vi. 3, 5). Sailing across the Lake, He arrived first at the eastern side and betook Himself with the Twelve to the seclusion of the mountainside. Presently, seeing the approach of the weary multitude, He "came out" from His retreat and descended to meet them on the plain.

Observe how picturesquely St. Mark presents the scene (vers. 39, 40), telling the story as he had heard it from the lips of his master Peter. "Order is heaven's first law"; and our Lord, to avoid confusion and to ensure that none of that vast multitude would be overlooked in the distribution, directed that they should "all sit down" or rather "recline *by companies* upon the green grass." And see how the Twelve carried out His instructions, probably on the suggestion of Philip with his practical turn and his skill in calculations (cf. Jo. vi. 7): "They sat down" or rather "reposed *in ranks* by hundreds and by fifties," making enumeration easy. The Greek word for "ranks" means literally "garden-beds" or "parterres," vividly depicting the scene presented by the orderly groups dotted here and there on the green plain.

## CONTROVERSY ON CEREMONIAL ABLUTION

vii. I-23

1 *Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.*

2 *And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with \*unwashed, hands, they found fault.*

3 *For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands †oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.*

4 *And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and ‡pots, brassen vessels, and of tables.§*

5 *Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?*

6 *He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.*

7 *Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

8 *For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.*

9 *And he said unto them, Full well ye ¶reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.*

10 *For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death.*

11 *But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother,*

\* Or, common. † Or, diligently: in the original, with the fist: Theophylact, up to the elbow. ‡ Sextarius is about a pint and an half.

§ Or, beds. ¶ Or, frustrate.



*It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free.*

12 *And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother;*

13 *Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.*

14 *And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand:*

15 *There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.*

16 *If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.*

17 *And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable.*

18 *And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him;*

19 *Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?*

20 *And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.*

21 *For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,*

22 *Thefts, \*covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:*

23 *All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.*

SEE exposition of Mt. xv. 1-20. Observe how St. Mark for the sake of his Gentile readers explains the Jewish rite of washing the hands before eating (vers. 2-4). He gives the reason of it when he defines the offence of the disciples as "eating bread with defiled" or rather, as the margin has it, "common hands"—hands which had been handling all sorts of things. The Pharisaic requirement was that ere eating the hands should be washed "oft" or rather, according to the true reading, "with the fist," that is, "up to the elbow," not merely by dabbling the fingers.

\* Gr. *covetousnesses, wickednesses.*

Especially needful was it when they returned from the market or, as Wycliffe has it in his old English, "fro chepynge," since in buying and selling they handled, for example, coins which had passed through Gentile hands. The Greek word for "wash" in this clause is "baptise" with the explanatory variant "sprinkle." These terms were synonymous in the Evangelist's day when, by reason of the scarcity of water, pouring or sprinkling and not immersion was the general mode of baptism. In ceremonial ablution the hands were held over the basin and water was poured over them. Again, observe the impassioned sting of our Lord's countercharge (vers. 11, 12). As construed in our Version, it is an example of the rhetorical figure of *apostrophe* or "falling silent," breaking off and expressing the obvious conclusion by a gesture (cf. Ex. xxxii. 32). "Ye say, If a man tell his father or his mother, 'It is *corban* (the Aramaic word for an offering to God), the money which I might have given for thy relief,' . . ." The best manuscripts, however, omit the ensuing "and," thus making the sentence an *anacoluthon*, an expressive breach of grammatical sequence. "Ye say, If a man tell his father or his mother, 'It is *corban*'—ye no longer suffer him to do aught for his father or his mother." The normal conclusion would have been "he need no longer do aught"; but the case was even worse than that, inasmuch as the Pharisees expressly prohibited his doing aught as a robbery of God. And so our Lord half-way through the sentence abruptly reconstructs it and concludes "ye no longer suffer him." And, finally, observe that clause "purging all meats" (ver. 19). It is not part of our Lord's private discourse to His disciples but an explanatory comment of the Evangelist: "This He said, pronouncing all meats clean," ruling out the old ceremonial distinction (cf. Ac. x. 13-15).

## RETREAT TO PHŒNICIA

vii. 24-31

24 *And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre, and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid.*

25 *For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet:*

26 *The woman was a \*Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.*

27 *But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast unto the dogs.*

28 *And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.*

29 *And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.*

30 *And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.*

31 *And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.*

**S**EE exposition of Mt. xv. 21-28. Our Lord's place of retirement on this occasion was some village in the neighbourhood of the ancient Phœnician sea-port of Tyre, which was still as of old a busy and wealthy emporium of world-wide commerce. And what happened when His seclusion was interrupted? Here St. Mark has preserved, albeit in a meagre and grudging fashion, a precious page of the

\* Or, *Gentile*.

story of our Lord's earthly ministry which St. Matthew with the indomitable antipathy of a Jewish Christian to the despised Gentiles has entirely obliterated (cf. Mt. xv. 29). According to the true text our Evangelist writes (ver. 31): "And again He quitted the bounds of Tyre and went through Sidon." It is but a brief itinerary, yet it discloses a blessed and unique ministry of the Saviour of mankind. It tells us that so far from immediately abandoning that heathen land and travelling southward He betook Himself first to Tyre and then northward to Sidon. He preached in those great heathen cities, and a very fruitful ministry it was; for afterwards when He was bidding farewell to Galilee He contrasted the faithlessness of her cities with His reception in Tyre and Sidon (cf. Mt. xi. 20-22; Lk. x. 12-15). Has no memorial of it survived despite the silence of the Evangelists? In the year 1849, as he travelled up the Ganges, the celebrated missionary Dr. Alexander Duff visited the magnificent mosque on the ridge of Futehpur-Sikri some four and twenty miles west of Agra, and on passing through its principal gateway he observed an Arabic inscription. It reads: "Jesus, on whom be peace, hath said: 'The world is merely a bridge: ye are to pass over it, and not to build your dwellings upon it.'" It is in no wise strange that a saying of our Lord should be recorded there; for not only was He recognised by the Koran and honoured by the ancient Mohammedans as a true prophet but the mosque of Sikri was founded by Akbar, that Emperor of Hindustan even more remarkable in the sixteenth century than Alexander Severus in the third for the large catholicity of his religious sympathies, "culling from every faith and race the best" (cf. Tennyson, *Akbar's Dream*). The inscription is doubtless an authentic saying of our Lord, and it is curiously identified as an echo of his Phœnician ministry. Bridges are never mentioned in the Scriptures, and the reason is that there were none in the Holy Land. Hence it was in some other land that He spoke those words, nor does it appear that He ever

preached in any other save Phœnicia. And there was a remarkable bridge at Tyre. The city stood on an island three quarters of a mile off the mainland (cf. Ezk. xxvii. 4), and it was connected therewith by Alexander the Great's famous mole, lined on either side, like the old Bridge of London, with houses and bazaars and traversed continually by caravans of rich merchandise. Here surely is the occasion of that saying of our Lord. As he preached to the people of Tyre, so busy with traffic, so heedless of Eternity, He turned the scene before Him into a parable: "The world is merely a bridge: ye are to pass over it, and not to build your dwellings upon it."



## QUEST FOR A RETREAT

vii. 32–viii. 26

32 *And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him.*

33 *And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue;*

34 *And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.*

35 *And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.*

36 *And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it;*

37 *And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.*

1 *In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them,*

2 *I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat:*

3 *And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far.*

4 *And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?*

5 *And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven.*

6 *And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they did set them before the people.*



7 *And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before them.*

8 *So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets.*

9 *And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.*

10 *And straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha.*

11 *And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him.*

12 *And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.*

13 *And he left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side.*

14 *Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf.*

15 *And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.*

16 *And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread.*

17 *And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?*

18 *Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?*

19 *When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve.*

20 *And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven.*

21 *And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?*

22 *And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.*

23 *And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought.*

24 *And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking.*

25 *After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.*

26 *And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town.*

SEE exposition of Mt. xv. 29-xvi. 12. All the while our Lord was mindful of the purpose which had brought Him to Phœnicia. He had gone thither thinking to be unrecognised and commune undisturbed with the Twelve; but His healing of the Syrophœnician woman's daughter had spread His fame abroad, and seclusion was no longer possible. So now He goes in quest of a fresh retreat. "He quitted the bounds of Tyre and went through Sidon unto the Sea of Galilee (or according to St. Matthew—not, as our Version has it, "nigh unto" but—"along" or "in a line with the Sea of Galilee") across the Region of Decapolis" (cf. v. 20). That is to say, on quitting Sidon He travelled south-eastward and, crossing the Phœnician frontier, entered Gaulanitis, hoping to find a retreat among the hitherto unvisited uplands to the east of the Lake of Galilee. Here again, however, He was disappointed; for He was followed from Phœnicia (cf. viii. 3) by an eager throng which increased as He went. They brought their sick to Him, and St. Mark records one specially moving incident (vers. 32-37). The sufferer was a deaf mute; and since it is written that he was not merely "brought" but "borne" or "carried" (cf. ii. 3) to Him, it would seem that he was also mentally defective, and was terrified by the commotion. Our Lord took him apart from the crowd. The poor creature could not hear His kind voice, but he could see His kind face and feel His kind touch. Our Lord not only laid His hand on him, caressing him like a timid animal, but still further to reassure him and win his confidence acted the physician. It was held of old that saliva had a medicinal efficacy, especially for affections of eye and ear (cf. Jo. ix.

6), and He applied this remedy. Here one manuscript reads, explaining the procedure (ver. 33): "He spat on His fingers, and put them into the deaf man's ears and touched the tongue of the stammerer." The poor creature had already experienced the treatment, and he would yield himself to it. His expectation was aroused, and the sight of his wistful face smote our Lord's heart. "He looked up to heaven and sighed," appealing to the merciful Father; and then in the Father's name, *Ephphatha*, said He in the Syriac speech of Gaulanitis—"Be opened."

To St. Mark we owe the record of another incident in the course of our Lord's quest for a retreat—His healing of a blind man at Bethsaida as He was making His way northward to Cæsarea Philippi (vii. 22–26): not Bethsaida the fisher-quarter of Capernaum but Bethsaida Julias near the eastern side of the upper Jordan fully a mile from its debouchment into the Lake. Desirous of privacy He would have avoided the town but for the necessity of purchasing provisions (cf. ver. 14); and had He healed the man there, He would once more have been beset by an importunate crowd. Therefore it is that He grasped the suppliant's hand and conducted him out of the town (cf. ver. 23), and there healed him. Observe the realism of the story. The man had never seen, and he had formed his ideas of external objects by conjecture, like that blind man, who, as the philosopher tells, conceived of the colour scarlet as resembling the blare of a trumpet, construing objects of sight, which he lacked, in terms of the sense of hearing which he possessed. So, when our Lord asked if he saw aught, the man replied: "I make out men; for I see them as trees walking about." They did not indeed answer to his blind idea of men: they were like his idea of trees; but he recognised them as men by their movements.



V

THE END IN SIGHT

viii. 27-x





## RETREAT TO CÆSAREA PHILIPPI

viii. 27-ix. 13

27 *And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Cæsarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am?*

28 *And they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets.*

29 *And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ.*

30 *And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.*

31 *And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.*

32 *And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.*

33 *But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.*

34 *And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me.*

35 *For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.*

36 *For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*

37 *Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*

38 *Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall*

*the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.*

*1 And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.*

*2 And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them.*

*3 And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.*

*4 And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus.*

*5 And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.*

*6 For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.*

*7 And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.*

*8 And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.*

*9 And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead.*

*10 And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.*

*11 And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come?*

*12 And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at naught.*

*13 But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.*

**S**EE exposition of Mt. xvi. 13–xvii. 13. At last our Lord had achieved His end. He had found a retreat where He might commune with the Twelve undisturbed. It was at Cæsarea Philippi—not in the town itself but in its vicinity,

among (not its "towns" but) its "villages" or, as St. Matthew has it (xvi. 13), in its "coasts," literally its "parts," that is, its environs. His purpose was to acquaint the Twelve with the tragic issue which was fast approaching and which was so incredible to them, obsessed as they were by their Jewish idea of a triumphant Messiahship, and moreover to reconcile them thereto by revealing to them not merely His sufferings but the glories which should follow them (cf. 1 Pet. i. 11). How He essayed the task and how impenetrable He found their prejudices we have already seen in our study of St. Matthew's narrative; and now it remains only that we should consider certain peculiarities of St. Mark's.

(1) It is puzzling to read that after His rebuke of Peter our Lord "called unto Him the multitude with His disciples" (ver. 34 R.V.). For there was no multitude about Him at Cæsarea Philippi. He was alone there with the Twelve. Evidently the original text has suffered corruption in the hands of early copyists; and how it came about appears from a comparison of the parallel narratives. St. Matthew has (xvi. 24) "Then said Jesus unto His disciples," and St. Luke (ix. 23) "And he said to them all," indicating how after dealing with Peter alone He now turns to the others and includes them in His further admonition. St. Mark doubtless wrote simply "He called unto Him His disciples," and in view of St. Luke's "them all" a dull copyist, thinking to elucidate the text, would readily write "the multitude with His disciples."

(2) Though rightly connected in the parallel narratives (cf. Mt. xvi. 28; Lk. ix. 27) with His challenge to their utter devotion, our Lord's cheering assurance that some of the Twelve would live to witness His Kingdom's triumph is here (ix. 1) made the beginning of a new chapter, prefacing the story of the Transfiguration as though, as not a few interpreters have supposed, it had its fulfilment in that revelation of His Resurrection-glory. It should be under-

stood that the sacred text originally ran continuously without a break. Its arrangement in chapters and verses, so useful to the reader, is a late innovation, and excellently as it serves its purpose it not unfrequently errs. The division into chapters was made by Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury (1207-28), and the division into verses by that famous printer Robert Stephens (Estienne), who, as his son Henri tells us, executed the delicate task in the course of a journey on horseback from Paris to Lyons in the year 1551.

(3) In the story of the Transfiguration the best authorities omit "as snow" (ix. 3); but whether it be authentic or not, we recognise its aptness when we remember that the scene was one of the lesser heights of the Hermon range within sight of the snow-capt peak gleaming afar in the moonlight.

## HEALING OF AN EPILEPTIC BOY

ix. 14-29

14 *And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them.*

15 *And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him.*

16 *And he asked the scribes, What question ye \*with them?*

17 *And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;*

18 *And wheresoever he taketh him, he †teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.*

19 *He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.*

20 *And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.*

21 *And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child.*

22 *And ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.*

23 *Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.*

24 *And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.*

25 *When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf*

\* Or, among yourselves.

† Or, dasheth him.



*spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.*

26 *And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead.*

27 *But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.*

28 *And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out?*

29 *And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.*

**S**EE exposition of Mt. xvii. 14-21 and Lk. ix. 37-43.

During our Lord's absence with the favoured three on the Mount of Transfiguration much had happened on the plain. The multitude had missed Him and had discovered where He was, and a father with an epileptic son had tracked Him to His retreat in the hope that He would heal the lad. A curious crowd attended him, including several Scribes, our Lord's malignant enemies, who resented His popularity and came to see what might happen and thwart Him if they could. On their arrival they found only the nine disciples. These had authority from the Master to work miracles (cf. Mt. x. 1), and the afflicted father appealed to them. They had essayed the task, but they had failed, and the reason was that the flame of their faith had burned low. Busying themselves in unholy contention, they had been neglectful of prayer (cf. ver. 29, where the best authorities omit "and fasting"), and their power had departed from them. Their impotence had been a grievous disappointment to the suppliant and a sore humiliation to themselves, all the more that the Scribes exulted in it.

Amid the excitement the Lord appeared on the scene with His three companions, and the sight of Him "greatly amazed" the multitude. Probably the reason was that His face, like that of Moses when he came down from Mount Sinai (Ex. xxxiv. 29, 30), was still radiant with the glory



of His heavenly fellowship. He asked what was ado, and the father acquainted Him with his errand and his unsuccessful appeal. The story grieved Him. The malice of the Scribes was a familiar experience, and it did not surprise Him; but it did surprise Him that His Apostles should have failed. It showed how ill they had profited by His instruction and how poorly qualified they still were for their task of continuing His work after His departure.

He bade the father bring the lad to Him. Since the word in the original signifies rather "carry" (cf. vii. 32), it would appear that he was a helpless creature; and it is nothing strange that the novelty of his circumstances excited him, and when he was set before our Lord, he was taken with a violent fit and dropped on the ground, struggling and foaming. It was a pitiful spectacle, and it might have been expected that the Lord would immediately interpose; but the healing of the lad was not His sole concern. He was primarily the Physician of souls, and when He healed physical maladies, it was always in order to the achievement of His work of salvation. And the unhappy father had need of His ministration. The failure of his appeal to the nine had shaken his faith, and the Lord would fain re-establish it. So, as they stooped together over the sufferer, He entered into conversation with him and inquired if the malady were of long standing. The father explained that it had afflicted the lad since his childhood, and had frequently imperilled his life through his falling in his seizures into the fire or the water; and then he added despairingly and not without impatience: "If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us." "Help" is a graphic word in the original. Literally "run at a cry," it is the word which the Apostle heard in his dream from the lips of the man of Macedonia (Ac. xvi. 9): "Come over and help us"; and elsewhere (Heb. ii. 18) it is well rendered "succour." The piteous appeal afforded our Lord the opportunity which He desired. "If Thou canst!" retorted He, according to the

true text. "There is no 'cannot' where there is faith." What was lacking was not power on His part but faith on the suppliant's. The accents of His gracious voice and the look of His kind face, the kindest the world has ever seen, reassured the poor father. "Lord," he cried, "I have faith: succour me where my faith is lacking." The very insufficiency of his faith was his strongest claim. That was enough. A violent paroxysm, and the lad lay to all appearance lifeless; but the Lord grasped his hand and raised him—healed.

## BACK IN CAPERNAUM

ix. 30-50

30 *And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know it.*

31 *For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day.*

32 *But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.*

33 *And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?*

34 *But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest.*

35 *And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.*

36 *And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them,*

37 *Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.*

38 *And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbad him because he followeth not us.*

39 *But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.*

40 *For he that is not against us is on our part.*

41 *For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because you belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.*

42 *And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.*

43 *And if thy hand \*offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:*

44 *Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*

45 *And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:*

46 *Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*

47 *And if thine eye †offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire:*

48 *Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*

49 *For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.*

50 *Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltiness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.*

**S**EE exposition of Mt. xvii. 22–xviii. 14. Here St. Mark contributes two striking additions. (1) He tells (vers. 38–41) how, when the Twelve were wincing under the Master's rebuke of their selfish rivalry, John, anxious not merely to introduce a less painful theme but to assure Him that despite the unseemliness of their behaviour they were not lacking in zeal for His honour, interposed a reminiscence, probably an experience of himself and his brother James in the course of their recent mission (cf. vi. 7). They had encountered a man casting out devils in His name. Probably he was one who had himself been healed by the Lord and was thus testifying of His grace (cf. v. 19, 20); but they did not stay to inquire. He was not an Apostle and had not received the apostolic commission (cf. iii. 14, 15); and they resented his usurpation, as they deemed it, of their

\* Or, *cause thee to offend*: and so vers. 45, 47.

† Or, *cause thee to offend*.

prerogative. It was the very spirit which by and by inspired the Judaist denial of St. Paul's apostleship inasmuch as he had never known the Lord after the flesh or been ordained by His hands; and that bitter controversy would hardly have arisen had they laid to heart His present censure. The evidence of a man's ordination is the Lord's acknowledgment of his ministry. As St. Paul said to his converts, "The seal of my apostleship are ye in the Lord" (1 Cor. ix. 2). This admonition our Lord clinches with a terse aphorism: "He that is not against us is for us" (R.V.); and here a question arises. For is not this the precise opposite of the maxim which He quoted in His refutation of the malignant Pharisees who ascribed His miracles to black art (cf. Mt. xii. 30): "He that is not with Me is against Me"? Both aphorisms were in common use, and they are in no wise contradictory; rather are they complementary. They were properly political maxims; and just as we have seen the former exemplified in Solon's decree that citizens who prudently held neutral in a time of civil commotion, should be accounted rebels when the issue was determined, so is the present maxim illustrated by Cæsar's pronouncement when he was striving to wrest the supremacy from Pompey, that he reckoned as his supporters all who were not against him. Honest perplexity was inevitable while his claims were yet untried; and where they were unopposed, they would surely be acknowledged when they were better understood. And even so, wherever our Lord found a gracious deed, if it were but the giving of a cup of water to the thirsty, there He recognised an unconscious faith. Such men were already His disciples; and when they knew Him better, they would openly and joyfully confess Him. Here is the principle which He enunciated in His picture of the judgment of the heathen world (cf. Mt. xxv. 31-46), where He claims as His own all who, though they have never seen His face or heard His name, are yet true to the light they have.



(2) To our Lord's solemn exhortation that in view of the eternal issues we should face the sorest sacrifice rather than indulge our selfish passions (cf. Mt. xviii. 6-9) St. Mark adds that admonition (vers. 49, 50). Observe that the clause "and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt" is omitted by the best authorities. It is a quotation from the Greek version of the Book of Leviticus (ii. 13); and as it stands there, it is an injunction that no corrupt offering should be laid on the Lord's altar. In a sultry climate flesh was quickly tainted, and therefore every sacrifice should be "salted with salt." Here it is an illustrative quotation which some early reader entered on the margin of his Gospel and which a careless copyist incorporated with the text. And a very opposite and illuminating quotation it is. Observe our Lord's argument. After warning His disciples, not for the first time (cf. Mt. v. 29, 30), that by persistent indulgence of evil passions men so corrode their spiritual nature that they are fit only to be "cast as rubbish to the void," like the refuse which was thrown into the loathsome pit of Gehenna, where the worm died not and the fire was not quenched, He tells them that, if they would escape that penal fire, they must resolutely endure the purifying fire of moral discipline. Even as sacrifices of old were salted with salt, so, says our Lord with that Levitical precept in His mind, must the soul be salted, not merely with biting, stinging salt, but "with fire," like the ore that is purged of its dross in the refiner's furnace. The fiery ordeal of moral discipline is the salt that makes a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God (cf. Rom. xii. 1). But He further reminds them that even this may be ineffectual, as the history of monasticism, for example, abundantly testifies. "What profit is it to you," wrote St. Isidore of Pelusium to the young monk Cyril, afterwards the ungracious champion of Christological orthodoxy, "that you have retired to the wilderness like John, when unlike him you hark back to your



private concerns, disquieted in the wilderness and thronged in solitude?" There is no efficacy in loveless austerity. It is like salt which has lost its saltiness (cf. Mt. v. 13). Have love in your hearts, and your lives will be wholesome and sweet and kind.

## MINISTRY IN JUDÆA

### X

1 *And he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judæa by the farther side of Jordan: and the people resort unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again.*

2 *And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him.*

3 *And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?*

4 *And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement and to put her away.*

5 *And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.*

6 *But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.*

7 *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife;*

8 *And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.*

9 *What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*

10 *And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter.*

11 *And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.*

12 *And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.*

13 *And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them.*

14 *But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.*

15 *Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.*

16 *And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.*

17 *And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?*

18 *And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.*

19 *Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.*

20 *And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.*

21 *Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.*

22 *And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.*

23 *And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!*

24 *And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!*

25 *It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.*

26 *And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?*

27 *And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.*

28 *Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.*

29 *And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,*

30 *But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and land, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.*

31 *But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.*

32 *And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him,*

33 *Saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles:*

34 *And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again.*

35 *And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire.*

36 *And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you?*

37 *They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.*

38 *But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?*

39 *And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized:*

40 *But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared.*

41 *And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John.*

42 *But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which \*are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.*

\* Or, think good.

43 *But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:*

44 *And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.*

45 *For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*

46 *And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimæus, the son of Timæus, sat by the highway side begging.*

47 *And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.*

48 *And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me.*

49 *And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee.*

50 *And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.*

51 *And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.*

52 *And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath \*made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.*

SEE exposition of Mt. xix, xx. Here, as in the parallel narrative of St. Matthew, we have merely a series of striking incidents; and we have seen how St. John has furnished their local setting. (1) See what is covered by that brief opening sentence: "He arose thence, and cometh into the borders of Judæa, and beyond Jordan" (R.V.). The first clause ("He arose thence") denotes His final departure from Capernaum about the close of August in the year 28, and the second ("cometh into the borders of Judæa") His progress through Galilee and Samaria until

\* Or, *saved thee.*



He reached Judæa, arriving at Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles toward the close of September (cf. Jo. vii. 2-14). There He remained until the Feast of Dedication at the close of December, when He retired "beyond Jordan," that is, as St. John explains, to Bethabara, the scene of the Baptist's earlier ministry (cf. Jo. i. 28) and of our Lord's call to enter upon His public ministry (cf. Jo. vii. 14-x. 42). There He engaged in a large ministry, and the incidents recorded here in vers. 2-31 belong thereto. (2) He remained at Bethabara until about the close of February, when He was summoned thence by tidings of the fatal sickness of His friend Lazarus at Bethany; and after the miracle of his raising from the dead He fled from the fury of the rulers to the village of Ephraim (cf. Jo. xi. 1-54). There He remained in retirement with the Twelve until it was time for Him to set out for the Feast of the Passover, which fell that year on April 16. Here St. Mark resumes the story (cf. ver. 32); and it was "while they were in the way, going up (from Ephraim) to Jerusalem," that the ensuing incidents occurred.

All these incidents we have already considered in our study of St. Matthew's narrative except the last—that of the healing of the blind man at the gate of Jericho (cf. vers. 46-52), not, as we have seen, the southern gate, "as He went out of Jericho," but, as St. Luke conclusively shows (cf. xviii. 35), the northern gate, as He approached the city (cf. observations on Mt. xx. 29-34). In the days of our Lord Palestine was no longer "a land flowing with milk and honey, wherein they ate bread without scarceness." It was a conquered and oppressed country, plundered by a horde of taxgatherers. The people were miserably poor, and the towns swarmed with beggars. The blind, the crippled, and the diseased occupied every convenient station (cf. Ac. iii. 2), displaying their wretchedness and appealing to the passers-by for charity. Jericho lay on the route from Galilee to Jerusalem, and especially at the seasons of the great Feasts when troops



of worshippers were passing on their way to the Sacred Capital, the approaches to the city were beset by mendicants.

One of these at that supremely memorable Passover-season was a blind man known as Bartimæus. That was not his name but only, as the Evangelist observes, a patronymic, "the son of Bartimæus." The very name of a creature so forlorn was forgotten, and he was known merely as the son of his father who in his day had been a man of some account. While he sat there by the wayside, dark amid the sunshine, listening for the footsteps of travellers and importuning each as he passed, he heard the tumult of an approaching multitude—the tramp of their feet and the clamour of their voices; and when they came abreast of him, he inquired what was ado and learned that "Jesus of Nazareth was passing by" (Lk. xviii. 37). It was glad news for poor Bartimæus, and his heart bounded with hope; and he thought no more of alms, since a better boon had come within his reach. He had heard the fame of the Prophet of Galilee and all the wonderful and gracious things which He had done, healing sick folk, giving sight to the blind, and even, only a few weeks ago, raising a dead man to life. It was said that He was the Messiah, the Son of David, the promised Redeemer of Israel, and was it not written of the Messiah (Is. xlii. 7) that He would "open the blind eyes, and bring them that sat in darkness out of the prison house"? Bartimæus had often wished that he might go to Him and pray Him to open his eyes; but it was a long way to Galilee, and he was poor and friendless and had no one to conduct him thither. And now here was the Saviour come to Jericho and passing along the road! His opportunity had arrived, and he would not let it slip. He could not see the Saviour but he knew that He was there, and he "began to cry out" above the din, more properly "to shout"—the word which is used of the disciples "crying out for fear" when they saw what they took for an apparition and of Peter "crying out" when he began to sink (Mt. xiv.

26, 30), of the Syrophœnician woman "crying after" our Lord and the Twelve (Mt. xv. 23), and of the children "crying in the Temple, Hosanna to the Son of David!" Bartimæus shouted, and St. Luke says more strongly still that he "roared" (xviii. 38)—the word which occurs in Ac. viii. 7, xvii. 6. He was determined that his voice would reach the Lord's ears, and he shouted lustily. The crowd, perhaps not observing that he was blind and supposing that he merely wanted alms, resented his importunity and bade him hold his peace; but he only shouted the louder.

Our Lord heard and understood his appeal, and He stopped. Silence fell on the crowd, and by way of reading them a lesson in humanity and consideration He bade those nearest Him call the beggar into the midst. "Be of good cheer" they said; "rise, He calleth thee." But he needed no prompting. He had heard the Lord's voice and, disencumbering himself of his mantle, he leaped to his feet and made toward Him. "What wilt thou," asked Jesus, "that I should do unto thee?" His gracious accents emboldened the supplicant. "Rabboni," he cried, giving Him that most honourable of Jewish designations which was to Rabbi as *Monsignor* is to *Monsieur* (cf. Jo. xx. 16), "that I may receive my sight." And his prayer was answered beyond his expectation. "Thy faith hath saved thee" said our Lord, healing as the word implies (cf. v. 34), at once his body and his soul.

Here we have (1) the cry of human need: "Jesus, have mercy on me"; (2) the Gospel's message: "Be of good cheer: rise, He calleth thee"; and (3) the Saviour's welcome: "Thy faith hath saved thee."

Ye that have eyes, yet cannot see,  
In darkness and in misery,  
Recall those mighty voices three,

Ἰησοῦ, ἐλέησόν με.  
θάρσει, ἔγειραι, φωνεῖ σε.  
ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκε σε.

Observe two textual emendations in this chapter: (1) In ver. 24 the best authorities omit "for them that trust in riches." Our Lord does not soften His hard saying but reiterates it in a kindly tone: "My children, how hard it is to enter into the Kingdom of God!" (2) In ver. 32 read: "they (the Twelve) were amazed; and the others (the worshippers going up with them from Ephraim to the Pass-over), as they followed, were afraid."



VI

THE TRAGEDY AND THE FINAL TRIUMPH

xi-xvi





## ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

### xi. 1-11

1 *And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples,*

2 *And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him.*

3 *And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither.*

4 *And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him.*

5 *And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt?*

6 *And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go.*

7 *And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him.*

8 *And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed them in the way.*

9 *And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord:*

10 *Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.*

11 *And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.*

**S**EE exposition of Mt. xxi. 1-16. Observe (1) a touch of local colouring in St. Mark's narrative which reminds us that he derived the material of his Gospel from his master Peter and suggests that the latter was one of the two disciples whom our Lord sent from Bethany to Bethphage to fetch the colt thence. Bethphage lay a little off the highway to the north-west of Bethany, and the house of our Lord's friend stood at the entrance of the village (cf. ver. 2) just where the road thither branched off. There they found the colt tethered outside the stable-door "at the cross-road" (ver. 4). (2) St. Mark, amplifying St. Matthew's abbreviated narrative, makes it plain that our Lord engaged in no active ministry that day after His entry into Jerusalem (cf. ver. 11). He merely visited the Temple-court, that place of general resort where He was wont to teach daily during His sojourns in Jerusalem (cf. xiv. 49), and "looked around about upon all things," "surveyed the whole scene"—a favourite phrase with St. Mark (cf. iii. 5, 34, ix. 8, x. 23), denoting a wistful, eager gaze. It was indeed for Him a moving scene: He had so often preached there, and His preaching was now so nearly done. Then at nightfall He left the city and "went out unto Bethany"—not the village but the western slope of Mount Olivet (cf. Mt. xxi. 17), where He lodged in the Garden of Gethsemane.

## THE BARREN FIG-TREE

xi. 12-26

12 *And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry:*

13 *And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet.*

14 *And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it.*

15 *And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves;*

16 *And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple.*

17 *And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called \*of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.*

18 *And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine.*

19 *And when even was come, he went out of the city.*

20 *And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.*

21 *And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.*

22 *And Jesus answering saith unto them, †Have faith in God.*

23 *For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those*

\* Or, an house of prayer for all nations?

† Or, Have the faith of God.

*things which he saith shall come to pass: he shall have whatsoever he saith.*

24 *Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*

25 *And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.*

26 *But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.*

**H**AD it been at the village of Bethany beneath the hospitable roof of His friend Lazarus that He passed the night, He would not have left it fasting next morning. But in Gethsemane there was no kindly hostess; and therefore, says St. Matthew (xxi. 18), "in the morning" or rather "early in the morning" (the word which occurs in Mt. xx. 1; Mk. i. 35, xvi. 2; Jo. xviii. 28, xx. 1) He set out for the city with the Twelve, meaning to breakfast there. The brisk air sharpened their craving; and espying by the wayside a leafy fig-tree, He naturally concluded that, though "it was not the season of figs," there would nevertheless be fruit upon it, since according to Pliny it was a peculiarity of the fig-tree that it formed its fruit ere putting forth its leaves, and evidently that tree, growing in the rich soil of the orchards of Mount Olivet, had matured early. On approaching it, however, He found no fruit—"nothing but leaves." "Never more," said He, "let any man eat fruit of thee," and therewith went His way to the city.

That day was uneventful (on the position of vers. 15-17 see observations on Mt. xxi. 12-15). He spent it peacefully yet profitably in discoursing to the multitude which thronged about Him in the Temple-court. In truth it was the stillness before the storm. The rulers were watching Him jealously, and they would fain have challenged Him; but they durst not since He was encompassed by the popular good-will. At nightfall again He betook Himself with the

Twelve to their hillside lodging. As they passed it, the fig-tree was hid from view in the darkness; but next morning as they returned the disciples were surprised to observe that it was withered from the roots. They had indeed heard the doom which He pronounced upon it, but they had taken it as merely a hasty word, an exclamation of disappointment. In truth He had spoken with a deliberate and solemn purpose; and the miracle, His sole miracle of judgment, was an acted parable. That tree, so advantageously situated, so profuse in profession yet barren, was a striking emblem of the nation of Israel. Already in a spoken parable (cf. Lk. xiii. 6-9) He had likened her to such a tree; and His miracle was an energentic repetition of that forewarning of impending doom. And thus He discoursed to them as they pursued their way. It amazed them that a light word, as it seemed to them, had proved so effectual; and He tells them that it was no light word. "Have faith in God," said He, "and ye too will work wonders." For faith achieves impossibilities, as the Jewish proverb had it, "removing mountains."

And then He spoke a great word of promise (ver. 24 R. V.): "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall have them." A large promise indeed, but none too large. For what is prayer as our Lord has taught us to conceive it? It is not telling God our desires and demanding of Him their performance. It is rather telling Him our needs and asking Him to meet them in His own way. And thus, according to our Lord's definition, there are two characteristics of prevailing prayer: (1) It is offered "in His name" (cf. Jo. xiv. 13, 14), which means that it is such prayer as He could "put His name to." And prayer thus authorised is sure of fulfilment. (2) It is "believing" prayer. "All things," He has told us (Mt. xxi. 22), "whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." And "be-



lieving" means "believing in God," trusting His love and wisdom and leaving the issue in His hands. Then we shall surely receive what we ask; but we shall receive it in His way, not perhaps the way which we expect but the way which is best, which, if we knew all, we would even now choose, and which we shall welcome when it appears.

This is true prayer, and it is the sort of prayer which our Lord contemplates in this great promise. "When you have thus prayed," He means, "then take the answer for granted; assume that God has heard you; and then go forward confident that He will in no wise fail you." It is just that word of the Psalmist (Ps. xxxvii. 5): "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him, and He will bring it to pass." It is not enough that we should "commit our way unto the Lord"; we must thenceforth "trust in Him"; for only so will He, only so can He, "bring it to pass." The principle here is that prayer in its essence signifies a surrender of our wills to God's, their identification therewith. His will is ever our good, and nothing but our wilfulness can frustrate it; and when we pray, we ally ourselves with Him in the working out of His purpose concerning us, and if only we stand faithful, not merely "committing our way unto Him" but "trusting also in Him" and keeping on trusting, then the triumph of His will is assured. And so this is the promise: Make the surrender and maintain it, and the issue is determined. Do your part, and God will do His.

Here (vers. 25, 26), fittingly though somewhat abruptly, is introduced that precept repeatedly inculcated by our Lord on occasions which St. Mark has omitted (cf. Mt. v. 23, 24, vi. 12, 14, 15, xviii, 21-35; Lk. 4, xvii. 3, 4): "Forgive if ye would be forgiven."

O man, forgive thy mortal foe,  
Nor ever strike him blow for blow;  
For all the souls on earth that live



To be forgiven must forgive.  
Forgive him seventy times and seven :  
For all the blessed souls in Heaven  
Are both forgivers and forgiven !

It was too precious to be left unrecorded, and the Evangelist makes room for it in a single sentence, since according to the best authorities ver. 26 is no part of the original text, being interpolated from St. Matthews (vi. 15).



## DISPUTATIONS IN THE TEMPLE-COURT

(xi. 27-xii. 37)

**O**N this whole section see exposition of Mt. xxi. 23-xxii. And here observe further St. Mark's embellishments of the several incidents.



## QUESTION OF AUTHORITY

xi. 27-33

27 *And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders,*

28 *And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?*

29 *And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one \*question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.*

30 *The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me.*

31 *And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him?*

32 *But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed.*

33 *And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.*

NOTICE here our Lord's insistent "Answer Me" (ver. 30). Its significance appears when the verse is written thus: "The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? . . . Answer Me," indicating a prolonged pause. Our Lord's unexpected counter-question disconcerted His assailants; and, as the Evangelist explains (vers. 31, 32), they held a whispered consultation what they should say. He stood by surveying them calmly and not without enjoyment of their discomfiture; and when no answer was forthcoming, He pressed them. "Answer Me" He demanded. "We cannot tell" or rather "We do not know," they faltered crestfallen.

\* Or, *thing*.

## PARABLE OF THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN

xii. 1-12

1 *And he began to speak unto them by parables. A certain man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the winefat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.*

2 *And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard.*

3 *And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty.*

4 *And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled.*

5 *And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some.*

6 *Having yet therefore one son, his wellbeloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son.*

7 *But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be our's.*

8 *And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard.*

9 *What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.*

10 *And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner:*

11 *This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?*

12 *And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way.*



HERE (ver. 4) we find another graphic touch peculiar to St. Mark. There is much dispute regarding the proper signification of the verb rendered "wounded him in the head." It was no uncommon word, but in its ordinary use it meant "bring under one head" and so "sum up." Thus we have it, for example, in Rom. xiii. 9 R.V.; Eph. i. 10 R.V. It is a mere guess that it bears here the unparalleled sense of "wound in the head"; and in his *Horæ Hebraicæ* that grand old English scholar Dr. John Lightfoot insists on taking it in its ordinary significance, thus ingeniously explaining it: *They cast stones at him, and reckoned the sum.* "Thou requirest payment?" said they. "Here is one instalment (casting a stone); here is another (casting another stone)"; and so on. Certainly this presents a graphic picture of the lawless scene; but unfortunately it is based upon an inflation of the original text due to its manipulation by early interpreters who thought thus to elucidate it. The best authorities omit "cast stones and," and for "sent him away shamefully handled" read simply "handled him shamefully." And what is the interpretation of the sentence thus abridged? The Revised Version adheres to the conjectural rendering "wounded him in the head," but it would appear from the ancient Greek lexicographer that the verb was employed colloquially in the sense of "strike with a club," literally "a stick with a head" or "knob." And thus the verse runs: "He sent" or more properly "commissioned unto them another slave (as all servants were in those days); and him they clubbed, and handled shamefully" or rather "disdained his request."

## QUESTION OF TRIBUTE

## xii. 13-17

13 *And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words.*

14 *And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?*

15 *Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a \*penny, that I may see it.*

16 *And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Cæsar's.*

17 *And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.*

**O**BERVE that where St. Matthew has (xxii. 15) "*en-snare Him in His talk*" or rather "*in an argument*," Mark has (ver. 13) "*catch Him in talk*" or rather "*by an argument*." The former term denoted properly taking a bird in a snare or trap; whereas the latter was properly a fisherman's word, denoting the taking of fish in a net. Thus it is the cognate noun that St. Luke uses (v. 4, 9) in his account of the miraculous "*draught*" of fishes. The significance of the distinction appears when it is remembered that our Evangelist's informant was his master Peter, the Galilean fisherman.

\* Valuing of our money sevenpence halfpenny, as Mt. xviii. 28.

## QUESTION OF THE RESURRECTION

xii. 18-27

18 *Then come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying,*

19 *Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave his wife behind him, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.*

20 *Now there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed.*

21 *And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise.*

22 *And the seven had her, and left no seed: last of all the woman died also.*

23 *In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife.*

24 *And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God?*

25 *For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven.*

26 *And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?*

27 *He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.*

(1) “**A**ND,” says the Evangelist, accurately defining this set of controversialists, “there come,” not “the Sadducees,” but simply “Sadducees unto Him, men who say there is no resurrection.” (2) In ver. 26 our Version’s

rendering is doubly at fault. On the one hand, it departs from the order of the original, which runs: "Have ye not read in the Book of Moses in the bush how God spake." So Wycliffe: "Yee have not red in the booc of Moyses on the busche: how God seyde." Evidently our translators were misled by the Old Testament text, where it is written (Ex. iii. 2, 4): "the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. . . . God called unto him out of the midst of the bush." Again, "in the bush" is properly, as Wycliffe has it, "on the bush," that is, "in the passage about the bush," "the passage entitled 'the Bush'"—the old manner of referring to a particular passage when there was no arrangement of chapters and verses. Cf. Rom. xi. 2: "what the Scripture saith in Elijah (R.V. marg.)," that is, "in the story of Elijah," where our Version has wrongly "of Elijah." (3) In ver. 27 "therefore" is, on manuscript evidence, an interpolation, concealing the recurrent swell of condemnation: "Do ye not err (ver. 24)? . . . Ye do greatly err."

## QUESTION OF THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT

## xii. 28-34

28 *And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?*

29 *And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:*

30 *And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.*

31 *And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.*

32 *And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:*

33 *And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.*

34 *And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.*

**S**T. MARK'S narrative of this rencontre is much fuller than St. Matthew's (xxii. 34-40); and the difference between them is that whereas St. Matthew is concerned with its official character as an attempt of the Pharisees not merely to retrieve their prestige after their discomfiture on the question of tribute but to score a success where their rivals the Sadducees has just failed so ignominiously, our Evangelist has rather a personal interest in the interlocutor.

And therefore (1) he ignores the circumstance that the Rabbi acted as the spokesman of his party and approached our Lord with a company of his colleagues (cf. Mt. xxii. 34, 35), and (2) he records his pompous attempt to pass off his embarrassment and our Lord's crushing rejoinder (cf. vers. 32-34).



## DAVID'S SON AND DAVID'S LORD

xii. 35-37

35 *And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David?*

36 *For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.*

37 *David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son? And the common people heard him gladly.*

**E**MPHASISING the completeness of the discomfiture of our Lord's assailants who, as he has just observed, "after that durst not ask Him any question," St. Mark now says merely that He "answered and said while He taught"; whereas St. Matthew states (xxii. 41) that He put the question in presence of the applauding multitude to the discomfited Pharisees. Now that they had put their questions to Him and durst not ask Him any more, He puts a question to them completing their humiliation. Observe that "Christ" should here (ver. 35) be "the Christ," that is, the Messiah.

## DENUNCIATION OF THE SCRIBES

xii. 38-40

38 *And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces,*

39 *And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts:*

40 *Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.*

SEE exposition of Mt. xxiii. It was a long and impassioned indictment; and though St. Mark has recorded but a fragment of it, he has preserved one horrifying charge which, though originally lacking in St. Matthew's extensive report, was introduced by early copyists into the received text thereof and appears in our Authorised Version (Mt. xxiii. 14)—that stinging exposure of a heartless rapacity which is abundantly corroborated by the evidence of Rabbinical literature and is illustrated, moreover, by the records of clerical oppression in the dark days preceding the Reformation, so mercilessly exposed, for example, on the pages of Erasmus and Sir David Lindsay. Observe that the verse is an independent sentence, and is properly rendered thus: "They that devour widows' houses and for a pretence make long prayers—these men shall receive a more overflowing condemnation." It was such hirelings as these that the Good Shepherd had in view when He said (Jo. x. 8): "All that came before Me are thieves and robbers"—

such as for their bellies' sake  
Creep, and intrude, and climb, into the fold.

Of other care they little reckoning make,  
Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,  
And shove away the worthy bidden guest;  
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold  
A sheep-hook, or have learn'd aught else the least  
That to the faithful herdsman's art belongs!

## THE WIDOW'S FARTHING

xii. 41-44

41 *And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast \*money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.*

42 *And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two †mites, which make a farthing.*

43 *And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:*

44 *For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.*

THIS moving incident has no place in St. Matthew's narrative, and St. Mark and St. Luke (cf. xxi. 1-4) agree in placing it after our Lord's denunciation of the Scribes. It has indeed a dramatic fitness there, breaking in like a gleam of sunshine after a tempest; yet it is difficult to conceive it possible that at the close of so stirring a day, when the Temple-court was seething with excitement, our Lord should have sat there thus peacefully. As we have repeatedly observed, it was the manner of the Synoptists to arrange their material topically, introducing incidents not as they occurred but rather as they served to illustrate the immediate purpose; and it may well be that this incident belongs to that first afternoon of our Lord's sojourn at Jerusalem, when after His triumphal entry He visited the Temple-court and "surveyed the whole scene." This would be one of the spectacles which then met His view.

\* *A piece of brass money:* See Mt. x. 9.

† It is the seventh part of one pence of that brass money.

The Treasury, a favourite resort of our Lord (cf. Jo. viii. 20), was the designation of the thirteen coffers, called from their shape "The Trumpets," which stood in the court of the Temple to receive the freewill offerings of the worshippers. There our Lord was seated with the Twelve as the worshippers streamed past at the hour of evening prayer. The rich ostentatiously threw in their handsome contributions; and presently there approached a poor widow, or rather "one poor widow" (R.V. marg.) suggesting that she had waited until the throng abated and then stole forward and timidly dropped in her offering, ashamed that it was so small and fain to conceal it from censorious eyes. Only "two mites, which make a farthing"! Indeed it was a meagre offering, since it took sixty-four farthings (*quadrantes*) to make a *denarius*, the silver coin which figures in our Version as "a penny" and which was then the ordinary day's wage (cf. Mt. xx. 2). Nor was her apprehension of ridicule groundless; for it would seem that even the disciples passed an ungracious comment. And this grieved the Master. He justly appreciated the widow's offering. For evidently He knew her. Perhaps she was one of the many sorrowful and burdened folk who during His recent sojourn in the city had learned from His lips the blessed secret which is better than gold, and her poor gift was a thank-offering for the joy and peace which she had found in believing. It looked very little, but it was the whole of her day's scanty earning. She could ill afford it, but she must express her gratitude to God; and so she would cast her two mites into His Treasury and go hungry till she had earned more. It was for her a costly sacrifice; and when our Lord marked the look of derision on His disciples' faces, He called them to Him and pointed out to them how much it was worth. It was in God's sight the most precious of all the offerings which they had seen cast into the Treasury. Many indeed were larger, probably none was so small; but how did they compare in God's estimation? He considers

not what is given but what is retained, not what is cast into the Treasury but what is left in the purse. The rich worshippers had contributed "out of their superfluity" (R.V.). All that they had given they could easily afford and they would never miss it; it cost them no sacrifice. But she had contributed "out of her want." Her offering was all that she possessed, and she could ill spare it. It was a costly sacrifice.



## DISCOURSE ON THINGS TO COME

xiii

1 *And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what build-ings are here!*

2 *And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.*

3 *And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately,*

4 *Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?*

5 *And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any man deceive you:*

6 *For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.*

7 *And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet.*

8 *For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginnings of \*sorrows.*

9 *But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them.*

10 *And the gospel must first be published among all nations.*

11 *But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premedi-*

\* The word in the original importeth the pains of a woman in travail.

*tate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.*

*12 Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.*

*13 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.*

*14 But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judæa flee to the mountains:*

*15 And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house:*

*16 And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment.*

*17 But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!*

*18 And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.*

*19 For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.*

*20 And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.*

*21 And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not:*

*22 For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.*

*23 But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.*

*24 But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light,*

*25 And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.*

*26 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.*

*27 And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.*

28 *Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near:*

29 *So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors.*

30 *Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.*

31 *Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.*

32 *But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.*

33 *Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.*

34 *For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.*

35 *Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning:*

36 *Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.*

37 *And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.*

**S**EE exposition of Mt. xxiv, xxv. Though St. Mark's report of this memorable discourse closely agrees with St. Matthew's so far as it goes, it is greatly abbreviated, lacking entirely the striking parable of the Ten Virgins (Mt. xxv. 1-13) and the no less striking picture of the Judgment of Heathendom (xxv. 31-46) and giving the parable of the Talents (xxv. 14-30) in an attenuated form (cf. vers. 34-37). It exhibits, however, a peculiar touch of that human interest so characteristic of our Gospel. St. Matthew (xxiv. 3) tells us merely that, as He sat that evening in the accustomed retreat on Mount Olivet, "the disciples" or, as St. Luke has it (xxi. 7), "they" asked Him the question which elicited the discourse; but St. Mark is more precise. He tells us that, evidently as He was sitting apart in solemn meditation on the approaching catastrophe, a group of them "asked Him privately." Naturally the group included the

favoured three, Peter, James, and John; but St. Mark tells us that it included also Andrew, suggesting what St. John has plainly indicated (cf. Jo. vi. 8, xii. 22), that as our Lord's ministry advanced Andrew had won His special confidence and been admitted to the inner circle. The mention here of his association with the favoured three is characteristic of St. Mark's Gospel; and we perceive its significance when we remember that our Evangelist wrote what he had heard from the lips of his master Peter, and that not only were Peter and Andrew brothers but there was between them a tender affection. This appears at the very outset of the evangelic story where St. John (cf. i. 40-42) relates how, when Andrew first met the Saviour at Bethabara, he hastened to his brother Simon and told him of his discovery and "brought him to Jesus." And is it not a revealing touch when in the story of that first Sabbath at Capernaum, whereas St. Matthew (viii. 14) and St. Luke (iv. 38) tell us merely that on quitting the synagogue our Lord betook Himself to Simon's house, St. Mark (i. 29) says that He entered into "the house of Simon and Andrew," intimating that the brothers shared one home? It was Simon's house, but love made room in it not only for his wife and her mother but for his brother, evidently a younger brother and unmarried. "Brotherly love" (*philadelphia*) was a characteristic of Peter, and the word was a favourite with him, occurring thrice in his two brief epistles (cf. 1 Pet. i. 22, iii. 8; 2 Pet. i. 7), just as often as in all the rest of the New Testament (cf. Rom. xii. 10; 1 Th. iv. 9; Heb. xiii. 1).

## THE TRAITOR'S BARGAIN WITH THE RULERS

### xiv. I-II

1 *After two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death.*

2 *But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people.*

3 *And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of \*spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.*

4 *And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made?*

5 *For it might have been sold for more than three hundred †pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.*

6 *And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.*

7 *For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.*

8 *She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.*

9 *Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.*

10 *And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them.*

11 *And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.*

\* Or, pure nard, or, liquid nard.

† See Mt. xviii. 28.



SEE exposition of Mt. xxvi. 1-16. The banquet at Bethany actually took place not two but "six days before the Passover" on the evening preceding our Lord's entry into Jerusalem (cf. Jo. xii. 1); and we have seen the reason why St. Matthew and St. Mark introduce it here. Exemplifying the traitor's greed of gain, it reveals the motive which prompted him to the villainy. Observe these novel features of St. Mark's narrative. (1) Like St. John (xii. 3) he designates the woman's offering "ointment of spikenard," that is, the eastern plant called in Latin *spica nardi*, "ear of nard," from the resemblance of its blossom to an ear of corn. But this is a doubtful rendering. The Greek phrase is "pistic nard"; and two explanations are given of the adjective which occurs nowhere else in Greek literature. One is that it means "liquid," but more probably it means "genuine" or "pure." Hence St. Matthew calls it "exceeding precious (R.V.) ointment" and St. John (xii. 3) "pistic nard exceeding precious." It was "exceeding precious" because it was "pistic" or "genuine." (2) The woman "brake the box" or rather "alabaster vase." It was not an accident. The ointment would have trickled slowly through the narrow neck of the vase, and fearful of being challenged for her intrusion and prevented from performing her office of reverence she broke the vase and poured out its fragrant contents. (3) In ver. 5 "they murmured against her" is rather "they frowned at her." It is a singularly picturesque and expressive word in the original signifying to "snort," like a restive horse, says the ancient lexicon, tossing its head and champing its bit. They durst not protest openly or even murmur audibly, but they frowned at her, wrinkling their brows and nodding to her. Further observe that the proper rendering in ver. 8 is: "She hath anticipated the anointing of My body for its embalming (cf. Mt. xxvi. 12)." St. Mark (ver. 11), like St. Luke (xxii. 5), says merely that the Chief Priests "promised" the traitor money; but St. Matthew tells us (xxvi. 15) that they paid down his price on the spot as though ashamed of the transaction and anxious to be done with it.



## THE LAST SUPPER

xiv. 12-31

12 *And the first day of unleavened bread, when they \*killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?*

13 *And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him.*

14 *And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?*

15 *And he will shew you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us.*

16 *And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.*

17 *And in the evening he cometh with the twelve.*

18 *And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me.*

19 *And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, Is it I? and another said, Is it I?*

20 *And he answered and said unto them, It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish.*

21 *The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.*

22 *And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.*

23 *And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it.*

\* Or, sacrificed.

(131)

24 *And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.*

25 *Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.*

26 *And when they had sung an \*hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.*

27 *And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.*

28 *But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.*

29 *But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.*

30 *And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.*

31 *But he spoke the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise, Likewise also said they all.*

**S**EE exposition of Mt. xxvi. 17-35. It was Thursday morning, and our Lord had as yet said nothing to the Twelve of getting ready for the Passover Supper that evening. It was high time to set about it; for there was much to be done, not merely the offering of the paschal lamb at the altar in the Temple-court and the dressing of its flesh and the procuring of the unleavened bread and the wine and the herbs but the finding of a room in the city. They had been waiting for His directions, and now when they could wait no longer, they asked Him where they should go and make ready. Then it emerged that He had privately engaged a room in the house of a friend, none other, as will presently appear, than Mary, the mother of John Mark, that widow lady who in after days was a gracious friend of the Apostles, especially Peter (cf. Ac. xii. 12-17). She and her son, the future Evangelist, had promised Him the use of a large room in their spacious house, an upper room re-

\* Or, *psalm*.

mote from disturbance and furnished with table and couches. Wherefore had He said nothing of it to the Twelve? Aware that Judas in pursuance of his unholy covenant with the rulers was watching for an opportunity to betray Him, He had kept it secret that He might enjoy that last season of holy fellowship and address His parting counsels to the faithful eleven. And even now He would not reveal it. He deputed two of them, Peter and John (cf. Lk. xxii. 8), and told them how they would discover their destination. On entering the gate of the city (cf. Lk. xxii. 10) they would meet a man carrying a pitcher of water—an unusual sight, since the drawing of water was a woman's office, and it was at evening that she went with her pitcher to the well (cf. Gen. xxiv. 11). They were to follow him, and when he reached the door, they were to enter with him and say to the master of the house: "The Teacher saith, 'Where is (not 'the' but) My guest-chamber?'" That was the pre-arranged pass-word, and it would ensure their reception. And thus the secret was kept to the last; for though Judas heard the direction, it told him nothing, and he durst not follow the two and discover whither they went.

Observe an instructive variation in ver. 30. According to the other Evangelists (cf. Mt. xxvi. 34; Lk. xxii. 34, Jo. xiii. 38) our Lord said "before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice"; but here He says "before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice." What of this seeming discrepancy? In our exposition of St. Matthew we have learned that "thrice" here signifies not "three times" but according to a common usage "again and again," "repeatedly." Sometimes it was "twice, thrice" or, as we say, "two or three times," "twice and again." Thus, where we read in our Version (Job xxxiii. 29) "All these things worketh God *oftentimes* with man," the Hebrew is literally "twice, thrice" (cf. R.V.). And so our Evangelist wrote here. According to several important authorities the sentence runs thus in the original: "before the cock crow twice thrice

shalt thou deny Me"; and since early manuscripts were unpunctuated, it was inevitable that, where the idiom was unknown, "twice" and "thrice" should be separated and the sentence made to run "before the cock crow twice, thrice shalt thou deny Me." And then the fulfilment was harmonised with the supposed prediction by adding (1) in ver. 68 the clause "and the cock crew," which the best authorities omit (cf. R.V. marg.) and (2) "the second time" or "straightway the second time" in ver. 72, where our earliest manuscript and several others have simply "straightway" (cf. Mt. xxvi. 74). Thus once more it transpires that what seems a vexing disagreement in the evangelic testimonies is in truth a blot cast on the sacred page by later and blundering hands. And, says the quaint old interpreter Dr. Adam Clarke, "where the rash or ignorant hand of man has fixed a blot on the divine records, let them who in the providence of God are qualified for the task wipe it off; and while they have the thanks of all honest men, God will have the glory."

## GETHSEMANE

xiv. 32-52

32 *And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.*

33 *And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy;*

34 *And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.*

35 *And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.*

36 *And he said Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.*

37 *And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour?*

38 *Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.*

39 *And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words.*

40 *And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer him.*

41 *And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.*

42 *Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.*

43 *And immediately, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.*

44 *And he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead him away safely.*

45 *And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, master; and kissed him.*



46 *And they laid their hands on him, and took him.*

47 *And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.*

48 *And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and with staves to take me?*

49 *I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: but the scriptures must be fulfilled.*

50 *And they all forsook him, and fled.*

51 *And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him:*

52 *And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.*

**H**ERE observe (1) that on manuscript evidence "and spake the same words" (ver. 39) should probably be omitted. According to St. Matthew (xxvi. 39, 42) our Lord did not on the second occasion precisely repeat His former prayer. He omitted His entreaty "let this cup pass away from Me," and renewed His self-surrender "Thy will be done." (2) The rendering "it is enough" (ver. 41), that is, enough of sleep, is grammatically questionable, all the more that it is hardly consistent with the gentle sarcasm of the preceding clause. The word in the original was a business term employed of the receipting of an account, and so it should be taken here: "He (that is, Judas) has settled the business."

Here in his story of the arrest (vers. 51, 52) St. Mark introduces without explanation a mysterious incident which is recorded by none of the other Evangelists and which at the first glance may seem to add a touch of comedy to the tragic scene. Who was this young man? The original has not merely "a certain young man" but "one certain young man," meaning that he appeared on the scene as a solitary figure. He was not one of the Twelve, yet it is written that he "followed Him" or rather "was following Him"; and surely this suggests, as several ancient interpreters perceived, that he belonged to the house where our Lord had eaten the



Passover that evening with the eleven, and had come out thence after them to Gethsemane. See then what had happened. It was late ere they finished their communing and left the Upper Room, and the friendly household had gone to rest; but this young disciple was not asleep. He knew how the Master was menaced by the hostility of the rulers, and anxiety had held him wakeful; and when he heard the company departing, he followed to observe what might befall. There was no time for him to don his wearing apparel; nor was it necessary, since the nightdress of well-to-do folk was a loose robe of white linen, quite presentable in public and sufficient for comfort in a mild climate. Thus attired he followed through the city, across the ravine of the Kidron, and up the slope of Mount Olivet to the Garden of Gethsemane; and there, lurking among the trees, he witnessed all that transpired.

Hence it appears not only that the scene of the Last Supper was the house of Mary but that this young man was her son John Mark, afterwards the Evangelist. Else how came it to pass that the story of our Lord's Agony in the Garden is recorded? The disciples were asleep, and they did not see Him withdraw Himself about a stone's cast off (Lk. xxii. 41) and cast Himself on His face or hear His anguished crying. Some witness there must have been, and he was none other than the Evangelist himself. He was not an Apostle and, as we have so often observed (cf. Introduction, p. xviii.), he derived the material of his Gospel from his master Peter; but the story of Gethsemane is a precious contribution of his own. He is telling here things which his own eye and no other had seen and his own ear and no other had heard; and this puzzling incident, so unostentatiously introduced, is the authentication of his testimony to understanding minds. It is an evidence of the reverence of our Evangelists for their Divine Lord that none of them has put his name to his book, forasmuch as He was their theme and they durst not intrude themselves; yet

even as of old an artist was wont to put his cryptogram in a corner of his picture, so has each Evangelist marked his book with a self-betraying touch. St. Matthew's cryptogram is his discovery that Levi the publican was none other than the Apostle Matthew (cf. Mt. x. 3), and his record of this quaint incident is St. Mark's.

Is it mere fancy to find a corroboration of the argument in a curious epithet which our Evangelist bore in the early Church? "Mark the Stump-fingered" he was called; and the epithet puzzled later generations. One suggestion was that, being, like his cousin Barnabas, of priestly lineage and having no taste for the priestly office, he had disqualified himself for it by amputating his thumb. Others have seen in it a reference to the brevity of his Gospel, regarding it as an abbreviation of St. Matthew's. But surely the epithet denoted a physical mutilation; and may it not be that he sustained this on that memorable night in Gethsemane? Seeing the Lord in the grasp of the soldiers, he emerged from his concealment in the hope of lending His assistance. Peter made his desperate onslaught upon the Chief Priest's servant, and in the ensuing scuffle Mark's hand was mutilated by the slash of a sword. He was seized (for "the young men" read simply "they") and would have perished had he not slipped out of his robe, leaving it in the grasp of his baffled captors.

## THE TRIAL:

### I. BEFORE THE JEWISH RULERS

xiv. 53-72

53 *And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes.*

54 *And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high priest: and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire.*

55 *And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death; and found none.*

56 *For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together.*

57 *And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying,*

58 *We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.*

59 *But neither so did their witness agree together.*

60 *And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus saying, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?*

61 *But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?*

62 *And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.*

63 *Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses?*

64 *Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death.*

65 *And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands.*

66 *And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest:*

67 *And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.*

68 *But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went into the porch; and the cock crew.*

69 *And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them.*

70 *And he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilæan, and thy speech agreeth thereto.*

71 *But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak.*

72 *And the second time the cock crew. And Peter calling to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And \*when he thought thereon, he wept.*

**S**EE exposition of Mt. xxvi. 57-75. (1) In ver. 54 read "right in into the courtyard of the High Priest; and he was sitting with the servants and warming himself at the blaze." (2) In ver. 68, as we have seen (cf. ver. 30), "and the cock crew" should on manuscript evidence be omitted, and in ver. 72 "straightway" substituted for "the second time." (3) In ver. 72 "when he thought thereon" is a possible and not unsuitable rendering, but two others are suggested in the margin: "he wept abundantly," literally "adding thereto he wept," and "he began to weep" or "set to weeping." Both these, though defensible, more especially the latter, are somewhat colourless; and very attractive besides according better with the grammatical construction is the ancient interpretation: "he covered his face and wept," "in his mantle muffling up his face, he fell a-weeping"—a token of grief or shame (cf. 2 Sam. xv. 30, xix. 4).

\*Or, *he wept abundantly, or, he began to weep.*

## 2. BEFORE THE ROMAN GOVERNOR

## xv. 1-19

1 *And straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate.*

2 *And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering said unto him, Thou sayest it.*

3 *And the chief priests accused him of many things: but he answered nothing.*

4 *And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee.*

5 *But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled.*

6 *Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired.*

7 *And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection.*

8 *And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them.*

9 *But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?*

10 *For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy.*

11 *But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them.*

12 *And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the King of the Jews?*

13 *And they cried out again, Crucify him.*

14 *Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.*



15 *And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.*

16 *And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Prætorium; and they call together the whole band.*

17 *And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head,*

18 *And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews!*

19 *And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees worshipped him.*

**S**EE exposition, of Mt. xxvii. 11-30. (1) "Straightway in the morning," that is, at daybreak, since, as we have seen, it could not legally meet till then, the Sandedrin convened to ratify the precognition before Annas, the Chief Priest *emeritus*, and pronounce formal sentence and remit the case to the judgment of the Roman governor. (2) In ver. 6 read "Now at feast-time he was wont to release." (3) In ver. 8 the best authorities with the omission of three letters read "the multitude came up and began to ask him to do as he was wont unto them." It was a popular privilege, and the rabble just at the critical moment presented themselves at the gateway of the Prætorium to demand it. (4) In ver. 16 read "led Him away within the courtyard, that is, the Prætorium," the governor's official residence at Jerusalem. In deference to the scruples of the Jewish rulers the trial, as St. John explains (cf. xviii. 28), had been conducted at the gateway of the Prætorium.



## DEATH AND BURIAL

xv. 20-47

20 *And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.*

21 *And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross.*

22 *And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull.*

23 *And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not.*

24 *And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.*

25 *And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.*

26 *And the superscription of his accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS.*

27 *And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.*

28 *And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.*

29 *And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days.*

30 *Save thyself, and come down from the cross.*

31 *Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save.*

32 *Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him.*

33 *And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.*

34 *And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

35 *And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, Behold, he calleth Elias.*

36 *And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down.*

37 *And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.*

38 *And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.*

39 *And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.*

40 *There were also women looking on afar off; among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome;*

41 *(Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him;) and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem.*

42 *And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath.*

43 *Joseph of Arimathæa, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.*

44 *And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead; and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead.*

45 *And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.*

46 *And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.*

47 *And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid.*

SEE exposition of Mt. xxvii. 31-61. (1) "They bring Him" (ver. 22) is properly, as in ii. 3, vii. 32, ix. 19, "they bear" or "carry Him," explaining the commandeering of Simon. Criminals carried their crosses to the place of execution; and our Lord had fainted beneath the burden. So shaken was He that even when relieved of it He needed support. (2) St. Mark gives merely our Lord's "accusation" (ver. 26). He was crucified according to Roman law for treason against the Emperor, inasmuch as He claimed to be "the King of the Jews." The superscription included also the criminal's name (cf. Mt. xxvii. 37; Jo. xix. 19). (3) "Thieves" (ver. 27) should rather, as we have seen in our study of St. Matthew's narrative, be "brigands." In the best manuscripts ver. 28 is lacking. Unlike St. Matthew, whose constant purpose was to persuade his Jewish readers of our Lord's Messiahship, St. Mark is not accustomed to cite Old Testament prophecies. The quotation here is more apt and striking, and probably it is a devout reader's marginal comment imported into the text. (3) In ver. 29, as in Mt. xxvii. 40, Wycliffe has "mouvynge here heedis." Our version "wagging their heads" is an expressive old English phrase (cf. Jer. xviii. 16; Lam. ii. 15; Zeph. ii. 15). Shakespeare has not only "wagging" and "wagglng the head" but "wagging the beard" and "wagging the tongue." (4) For "went in boldly" (ver. 43) read "plucked up courage and went in unto Pilate." Where Joseph needed courage was not in approaching the governor but in coming out on the Lord's side, as he fain would long ago had he dared (cf. Jo. xix. 38). "Gave" (ver. 45) is properly "granted" (R.V.), "bestowed as a gift." The point is that Pilate, like his successor Felix (cf. Ac. xxiv. 26), was notorious for venality, and Joseph was prepared to pay a heavy bribe for permission to take the Lord's body; but so impressed was he and so ill at ease that he made a free gift of it. So it is written in the apocryphal *Acts of Pilate* (xi. 3): "So then, when he saw Joseph thus insistent and supplicating and weeping, he

raised him, saying: 'Away! I freely grant thee such a corpse. Take Him, and do whatsoever thou wilt.' " In view of the oft noted circumstance that St. Mark's Gospel is his report of the story as he had heard it from the lips of his master Peter, it is significant that this word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament save in the second epistle of St. Peter (i. 3, 4): "His divine power hath *granted* unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness. . . . He hath *granted* unto us His precious and exceeding great promises" (R.V.).

## THE RESURRECTION

xvi

1 *And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.*

2 *And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.*

3 *And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?*

4 *And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away; for it was very great.*

5 *And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.*

6 *And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.*

7 *But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.*

8 *And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.*

9 *Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.*

10 *And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.*

11 *And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.*

12 *After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.*



13 *And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them.*

14 *Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat \*at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.*

15 *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*

16 *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

17 *And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;*

18 *They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*

19 *So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.*

20 *And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.*

**S**EE exposition of Mt. xxvii. 62–xxviii. Brief as is this narrative of the Resurrection, only the first eight verses are the work of our Evangelist. The rest of the chapter is by a later hand (cf. R.V.). Broadly stated, the evidence is twofold. (1) Not only in our two earliest and most authoritative manuscripts of the Gospels—the Codex Sinaiticus, dating from the middle of the fourth century, and the almost contemporaneous Codex Vaticanus—but in the Old Syriac Version about a century earlier the text closes with the words “for they were afraid” (ver. 8), and in all three a blank space is left ere the beginning of St. Luke, indicating apparently that the narrative is incomplete whatever may have been the reason, whether that the Evangelist through death or some other mischance never finished it or that the

\* Or, *together*.



last leaf of his autograph was lost. (2) It was inevitable that later hands should attempt to make good the defect by writing an appropriate conclusion; and the familiar ending of our Version (vers. 9-20) is only one of various supplements. In several manuscripts it appears in company with another much briefer which runs thus:

“For they were afraid. But all that had been commanded they briefly reported to Peter and his company. And thereafter Jesus Himself also sent forth by them from East even unto West the holy and incorruptible message of the eternal salvation.” Our ending, however, was the most generally accepted, for this if for no other reason that it is a close imitation of the other evangelic narratives. It is ascribed in a tenth century copy of the Armenian Version to Ariston, meaning probably Aristion who is known from an early mention of his name as one of our Lord’s disciples in the days of His flesh. Be this as it may, it is certainly very ancient, since there are clear references to it by St. Justin Martyr and St. Irenæus in the second century. Yet even where it was accepted, it was never regarded as final or as equally authoritative with the rest of our Gospel. Thus, in his Latin *Dialogue against the Pelagians* St. Jerome quotes a passage which he had found at the close of St. Mark’s Gospel in several manuscripts mostly Greek; and it is curious that in the Freer manuscript discovered near Akhmîm in 1906 that passage is incorporated with our conclusion thus:

“He upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen. And they made their defence, saying: ‘This age of lawlessness and unbelief is under Satan who doth not suffer the unclean things that are controlled by the spirits to apprehend the truth and power of God. Therefore reveal Thy righteousness now,’ said they to Christ. And Christ replied to them: ‘The term of the years of

Satan's authority hath been fulfilled ; but other fearful things are drawing nigh, even for those on whose behalf, for that they had sinned, I was delivered unto death, that they might turn unto the truth and sin no more, that so they might inherit the spiritual and incorruptible glory in heaven. But go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to all the creation, etc.' "

It needs no scholarly equipment or literary judgment to perceive how poor and mean and how unworthy of the sacred narrative are all these later supplements ; and in the mischance which so mutilated our Gospel may we not justly recognise a gracious providence bringing home to us by contrast the surpassing glory of those Scriptures which came not by the will of man but by inspiration of the Holy Spirit ?

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO  
ST. LUKE

*The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.*

THE PROPHET ISAIAH.



## SUMMARY

	PASSAGE	PAGE
THE DEDICATION . . . . .	i. 1-4	157

### BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF OUR LORD

(i. 5-ii)

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST . . . . .	i. 5-25	163
THE ANNUNCIATION . . . . .	i. 26-38	168
MARY AND ELISABETH . . . . .	i. 39-56	174
THE BIRTH OF JOHN . . . . .	i. 57-80	179
THE BIRTH OF OUR LORD . . . . .	ii. 1-7	183
THE SHEPHERDS. . . . .	ii. 8-20	186
THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE . . . . .	ii. 21-38	190
THE HOLY CHILD'S FIRST PASSOVER . . . . .	ii. 39-52	195

### OUR LORD'S CALL

(iii-iv. 13)

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST . . . . .	iii. 1-22	203
THE GENEALOGY OF OUR LORD . . . . .	iii. 23-38	208
HIS TEMPTATION . . . . .	iv. 1-13	212

### THE GALILEAN MINISTRY

(iv. 14-ix. 50)

SERMON IN THE SYNAGOGUE OF NAZARETH . . . . .	iv. 14-30	217
A SABBATH DAY AT CAPERNAUM . . . . .	iv. 31-44	222
THE DRAUGHT OF FISHES . . . . .	v. 1-11	224
HEALING A LEPER . . . . .	v. 12-16	228
HEALING A PARALYTIC . . . . .	v. 17-26	230
OFFENCE OF LOVING SINNERS . . . . .	v. 27-32	233
NEGLECT OF FASTING . . . . .	v. 33-39	235
SABBATH-BREAKING . . . . .	vi. 1-11	237
THE ORDINATION OF THE TWELVE . . . . .	vi. 12-19	241
THE ORDINATION ADDRESS. . . . .	vi. 20-49	244
HEALING OF A CENTURION'S SLAVE . . . . .	vii. 1-10	248
THE WIDOW OF NAIN . . . . .	vii. 11-17	251
A DEPUTATION FROM JOHN THE BAPTIST . . . . .	vii. 18-35	255

	PASSAGE	PAGE
THE SINFUL WOMAN IN THE HOUSE OF SIMON THE PHARISEE . . . . .	vii. 36-50	258
MINISTERING WOMEN. . . . .	viii. 1-3	265
THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER . . . . .	viii. 4-21	268
RETREAT ACROSS THE LAKE . . . . .	viii. 22-39	272
JAIKUS' DAUGHTER AND A WOMAN WITH HEMORRHAKE . . . . .	viii. 40-56	275
PREMONITIONS OF THE END (ix. 1-36):		
1. COMMISSION OF THE TWELVE . . . . .	ix. 1-6	278
2. FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND . . . . .	ix. 7-17	280
3. EXPRESS ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE PASSION . . . . .	ix. 18-27	282
4. THE GLORY THAT SHOULD FOLLOW. . . . .	ix. 28-36	284
AFTER THE TRANSFIGURATION . . . . .	ix. 37-50	286

### SETTING HIS FACE TOWARD JERUSALEM

(ix. 51-xix. 27)

#### JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM (ix. 51-x):

1. UNFRIENDLY SAMARITANS . . . . .	ix. 51-56	292
2. HALF-HEARTED BELIEVERS . . . . .	ix. 57-62	295
3. THE COMMISSION OF THE SEVENTY . . . . .	x. 1-16	297
4. THE RETURN OF THE SEVENTY . . . . .	x. 17-24	301
5. WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR? . . . . .	x. 25-37	303
6. MARTHA AND MARY . . . . .	x. 38-42	307

### MEMOIRS OF OUR LORD'S LATER MINISTRY

(xi-xix. 27)

#### I. INCIDENTS WHILE HE LINGERED IN GALILEE

(xi-xiii. 21)

A LESSON IN PRAYER . . . . .	xi. 1-13	311
CHARGE OF ALLIANCE WITH THE DEVIL . . . . .	xi. 14-36	318
AT A PHARISEE'S TABLE . . . . .	xi. 37-54	322
ADMONITION OF THE DISCIPLES . . . . .	xii. 1-12	327
A LESSON IN WORLDLY-MINDEDNESS . . . . .	xii. 13-34	331
INCENTIVES TO UNWORLDLINESS (xii. 35-59):		
1. THE UNCERTAINTY OF THE DAY OF RECKONING . . . . .	xii. 35-48	336
2. THE APPROACHING ORDEAL . . . . .	xii. 49-53	340
3. DISCERNING THE TIME . . . . .	xii. 54-59	342
A CALL TO REPENTANCE . . . . .	xiii. 1-9	344
HEALING A CRIPPLED WOMAN ON THE SABBATH . . . . .	xiii. 10-21	347



# SUMMARY

155

	PASSAGE	PAGE
2. Incidents on the Road to Jerusalem		
(xiii. 22-xix. 28)		
A QUIBBLING QUESTION . . . . .	xiii. 22-30	350
A FRIENDLY WARNING . . . . .	xiii. 31-35	353
OUR LORD'S TABLE-TALK . . . . .	xiv. 1-24	355
THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP . . . . .	xiv. 25-35	361
OUR LORD'S OFFENCE OF LOVING SINNERS . . . . .	xv. 1, 2	365
HIS DEFENCE (xv. 3-32):		
1. THE LOST SHEEP . . . . .	xv. 3-7	367
2. THE LOST GROAT . . . . .	xv. 8-10	369
3. THE LOST SON . . . . .	xv. 11-32	371
THE USE OF WORLDLY WEALTH . . . . .	xvi. 1-13	379
PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND THE BEGGAR . . . . .	xvi. 14-31	385
PRIVATE INSTRUCTION OF THE TWELVE . . . . .	xvii. 1-10	390
A GRATEFUL SAMARITAN . . . . .	xvii. 11-19	394
THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD . . . . .	xvii. 20-37	396
PARABLE OF THE UNRIGHTEOUS JUDGE . . . . .	xviii. 1-8	400
THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN . . . . .	xviii. 9-14	403
INCIDENTS AT BETHABARA . . . . .	xviii. 15-30	406
ON THE ROAD FROM EPHRAIM . . . . .	xviii. 31-34	408
AT JERICHO (xviii. 35-xix. 28):		
1. A BLIND BEGGAR . . . . .	xviii. 35-43	409
2. ZACCHAEUS THE PUBLICAN . . . . .	xix. 1-10	410
3. PARABLE OF THE POUNDS . . . . .	xix. 11-27	414

## THE PASSION WEEK

(xix. 28-xxiii)

ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM . . . . .	xix. 28-48	423
DISPUTATIONS IN THE TEMPLE-COURT. . . . .	xx. 1-44	426
AN IMPRESSIVE CONTRAST . . . . .	xx. 45-xxi. 4	430
DISCOURSE ON THINGS TO COME . . . . .	xxi. 5-38	432
THE TRAITOR'S BARGAIN . . . . .	xxii. 1-6	435
THE LAST SUPPER . . . . .	xxii. 7-20	437
CONVERSATION AT THE TABLE . . . . .	xxii. 21-38	439
THE AGONY IN GETHSEMANE . . . . .	xxii. 39-46	443
THE ARREST . . . . .	xxii. 47-53	446
THE PRECOGNITION . . . . .	xxii. 54-65	448
THE TRIAL BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN . . . . .	xxii. 66-71	451
THE TRIAL BEFORE PILATE . . . . .	xxiii. 1-25	452
THE CRUCIFIXION . . . . .	xxiii. 26-49	456
THE BURIAL . . . . .	xxiii. 50-56	462
THE RESURRECTION . . . . .	xxiv. 1-49	464
THE ASCENSION. . . . .	xxiv. 50-53	473



## THE DEDICATION

### i. 1-4

1 *Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,*

2 *Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word;*

3 *It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,*

4 *That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.*

ST. LUKE, the only Gentile among the sacred writers, was an educated Greek gentleman and a physician by profession; and these characteristics appear in the passage before us. (1) He follows the Greek fashion by dedicating his work to a friend, Theophilus. Who this may have been is unknown. Indeed it has always been a question whether he were an actual personage. For Theophilus signifies "beloved of God"; and it has been supposed that the Evangelist here intimates that he is writing for the profit and instruction of believers. But it was a common name among both Jews and Gentiles; and it puts the question beyond dispute that the address is not simply "Theophilus" but "most excellent Theophilus" or rather "your Excellency Theophilus." It was an official designation regularly accorded, for example, to a provincial governor (cf. Ac. xxiii. 26, xxiv. 3, xxvi. 25 R.V.); and since tradition has it that the Province of Achaia was the scene of St. Luke's later ministry, it may reasonably be inferred that Theophilus was an imperial

dignitary whom he had there won to the Faith. (2) His Greek culture appears in the literary grace of the dedication. In the rest of his narrative he either reproduces, with scrupulous fidelity, the common evangelic tradition, the oral testimony of the men who had been with the Lord in the days of His flesh, or reports, just as he had heard it, information which he had gleaned among the men and women who, though not Apostles, had known Him then; but here, where he is writing freely, he uses in the original the style of a literary artist. And (3) his language betrays the physician. Even as the dyer's hand is subdued to what it works in, so is a man's speech to his worldly business; and here "the beloved physician" makes effective use of phrases which served as medical terms and bore on his lips a professional suggestion. Thus, when he says "taken in hand," he employs a verb which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament save in his Book of Acts (cf. ix. 29, xix. 13), where we read of Saul's enemies "going about to kill him" and the exorcists of Ephesus "taking upon them" to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus as an incantation. It is constantly used in the medical works of Hippocrates and Galen of a physician "undertaking" or "taking in hand" the treatment of a case; and here St. Luke appropriately employs it of rash practitioners who have taken a task in hand without the necessary equipment, referring especially to those legend-mongers who were already corrupting the evangelic tradition with such "profane and oldwifish fables" (cf. 1 Tim. iv. 7) as we find in the apocryphal Gospels. Again, "declaration" or, as the Revisers have it, "narrative," a word which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, was the regular term for a medical "treatise." Thus, Hippocrates had "A Treatise of Sweet Wine" and Galen "A Treatise on the Cure of the Bite of Venomous Beasts." Again, "eyewitness" (*autoptist*), which also occurs only here in the New Testament, signified in medical parlance an expert physician who made a personal examination (*autopsy*), while the

subordinate who assisted him in an operation or treated the case according to his directions, was his "minister"—his attendant or assistant. Here the Evangelist is referring to the Apostles and their fellow-disciples who enjoyed a lesser intimacy with "the Word," which signifies here not, as with St. John (cf. Jo. i. 1-14), the Eternal Word made flesh but the Gospel Message. Again, when he claims to have "had perfect understanding of all things from the very first" or rather to have "followed all things accurately from their source," he is employing another professional phrase. It was used in medical terminology either of the progress of a malady, as when it is said that numbness "follows upon" a sharp pain, or of a physician's observation of its progress, his "following" of its development.

We miss the significance of these verses unless we understand that they were intended as an introduction not merely to the Gospel. St. Luke's design was to write a history of the Christian Church down to his own time, "a treatise," as he puts it according to the true rendering of his words, "on the deeds which have been fulfilled among us." His Gospel was, as he expressly states (Ac. i. 1 R.V. marg.), "the first narrative" of his projected work, and he continued it in a second, the Book of Acts, meaning, had he been spared, to write yet a third. The Gospel is his story of the sacred beginning or, as he puts it, "all that Jesus began both to do and to teach," and the ensuing narrative shows how these initial "deeds" were "fulfilled," "completed," or "finished off." And here he proceeds to state his special qualification for the task which he had 'taken in hand.' It was not that he had been "an eyewitness of the Word"; for he was not one of the original disciples who had companied with the Lord in the days of His flesh, and his knowledge of the initial deeds was derived from the evangelic tradition, the testimony of the men among whom He went in and out, beginning from the baptism of John unto the day that He was received up (Ac. i. 21, 22). While as yet there were

no written Gospels, it was an oral tradition, carefully guarded and diligently transmitted; and therein St. Luke had been well "instructed" or, as the phrase is in the original, "catechised." And he had, moreover, this unique qualification that he had "accurately followed the whole course" of subsequent events, the development of those great beginnings, and thus was able to exhibit the concatenation of their fulfilment. "Forasmuch," he says, "as many have taken in hand to draw up a treatise on the deeds which have been fulfilled among us as they were transmitted to us by those who from the beginning served as eyewitnesses and attendants of the Word, it seemed good to me also, since I had followed accurately their whole course from their origin, to write it down in orderly sequence for thee, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mayest fully perceive the surety of the words wherein thou wast catechised."



BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF  
OUR LORD

i. 5-ii



## ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

i. 5-25

5 *There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judæa, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth.*

6 *And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.*

7 *And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years.*

8 *And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course.*

9 *According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.*

10 *And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.*

11 *And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.*

12 *And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.*

13 *But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.*

14 *And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.*

15 *For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.*

16 *And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.*

17 *And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient \*to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*

18 *And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and, my wife well stricken in years.*

19 *And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.*

20 *And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.*

21 *And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.*

22 *And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.*

23 *And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.*

24 *And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,*

25 *Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.*

**H**ERE at the outset St. Luke makes good his claim that he had "followed accurately the whole course of events from their origin" by telling of the antecedents of our Lord's forerunner John the Baptist. Even in our English version we perceive a marked difference in the style of his narrative here, so unlike his dedication in its artless simplicity and its scriptural colouring, and recognise that he is repeating the story as he had learned it in the course of his diligent research from local reminiscences. Zacharias and Elisabeth had indeed passed away ere ever he visited Judæa, but the memory of the famous prophet's birth would be cherished there. Their home was at "the City of Judah" (cf. i. 39), probably that village some four miles west of Jerusalem which still retains its old name, *Khirbet el-Jehud*.

\*Or, *by*.

Zacharias, the Greek form of Zechariah, was a priest, and he and his wife Elisabeth, devout Israelites, were childless—a heavy calamity in Jewish eyes; for is it not written in the Talmud that “these four are reckoned as dead—the blind, the leper, the poor, and the childless”? And being now old, they had abandoned all hope of issue. The Jewish priesthood was divided into twenty-four “courses,” which ministered successively in the Temple, each for a week (cf. 1 Chr. xxiv. 1–12). Zacharias belonged to the eighth of these, the course of Abia or Abijah; and his turn, “the days of his ministration,” had now come round.

Observe how carefully the Evangelist here fixes the chronology after a fashion which though somewhat obscure to us, would be clear to his contemporaries. First he states that it was “in the days of Herod, the King of Judæa.” Herod died on April 1 in the year 4 B.C.; and the Evangelist presently furnishes evidence that it was now the year 6. And what was the month? Josephus records that the Temple was destroyed by Titus in the year 70 on Sabbath August 4, the day when the first priestly course, that of Jehoiarib, began its week of ministration; and hence it is reckoned that in 6 B.C. the eighth course’s days of ministration fell toward the close of the month of May.

The various offices of each day’s ministration were assigned by lot, and that day Zacharias had been charged with the office of entering into—not “the Temple” but—“the Sanctuary,” the sacred shrine with its two chambers, the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, and burning incense morning and evening on the altar situated in the outer chamber before the Veil betwixt it and the inner chamber which was entered by the High Priest alone once a year on the Day of Atonement (cf. Ex. xxx. 1–10). It was apparently the morning hour immediately after the allotment of the offices; and he had entered the Sanctuary, leaving the worshippers in the court without engaged in silent repetition of the prescribed prayers, when “there ap-

peared unto him" or rather "he had a vision of an angel of the Lord standing on the right of the altar of incense." An angel is properly "a messenger," but this was no human messenger. It was a heavenly visitant, one of those ministering spirits who ever compass us, invisible to the eye of sense, and who were employed by God of old when the light of revelation was yet dim to communicate His purposes to the children of men (see exposition of Mt. i. 18-25). And what was his message? "Thy prayer is heard, and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son." It may seem at the first glance as though the prayer thus graciously fulfilled were the desire of Zacharias and his wife that a child should be granted them; but surely now that they were "well stricken in years" they had long despaired thereof, and, says St. Augustine, "no one prays to receive what he despairs of receiving." His prayer had been not for a child but for "the salvation and redemption of his people," and it is of the fulfillment of this godly aspiration that he is now assured. And thus it came to pass that he gained his personal desire by forgetting it and setting his heart on the good of others and the glory of God. For the angel's message was not only that the Messiah's advent was nigh but that a son born to Zacharias and Elisabeth would be His herald, a mighty prophet imbued with the spirit of Elijah and so fulfilling the Jewish expectation that on the eve of the Redeemer's advent Elijah would reappear and prepare the nation to receive Him (see exposition of Mt. iii. 1-12). Therefore should the child be named John or "Grace of the Lord" and consecrated to his high service by the Nazirite vow (cf. Num. vi. 1-21).

It helps us to a just appreciation of the story if we consider its origin. Assuredly Zacharias would never profane the awful mystery of his vision in the seclusion of the Sanctuary by publishing it abroad. But the worshippers perceived by his long tarrying there and his being stricken dumb on his reappearance that he had been solemnly en-



gaged. By and by his testimony would confirm their surmise, and here we have the story which was woven from the circumstances and from such disclosures as fell from his lips. And we realize how exceedingly beautiful and profoundly true the story is when we read it in the light of the religious ideas prevailing among the Jews in those days. Think what it means that the angel is here designated Gabriel. The name, unknown in the earlier scriptures, first appears in the Book of Daniel (viii. 16, ix. 21), that noblest of the apocalyptic writings wherewith the persecuted Jews were comforted by cryptic unfoldings of the Lord's redeeming purposes. And what is the part which Gabriel, "the man of God," played in the devout imagination of those bitter years? He was the messenger of mercy as Michael was the messenger of judgment; and hence it was said that, since the Lord is ever slow to smite and swift to bless, Michael flew with one wing while Gabriel, as hasting on his errands, flew with two. Therefore, when the promise of his child's birth and the Redeemer's advent was vouchsafed to Zacharias, who else could it be than Gabriel that "shewed him these glad tidings"? It was a sacred and solemn experience, and the awful reverence which sealed the lips of Zacharias and Elisabeth appears in her behaviour when on the fulfillment thereof she "hid herself five months" from the sight of her neighbours, unworthy as they were to hear how the Lord had dealt with her.

## THE ANNUNCIATION

i. 26-38

26 *And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,*

27 *To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.*

28 *And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art \*highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.*

29 *And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.*

30 *And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.*

31 *And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.*

32 *He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God give unto him the throne of his father David:*

33 *And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*

34 *Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?*

35 *And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.*

36 *And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.*

37 *For with God nothing shall be impossible.*

\* Or, graciously accepted, or, much graced: See ver. 30.

(168)

38 *And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.*

SINCE it was toward the close of May when Zacharias received the promise in the Sanctuary, and it was after his return home (cf. ver. 24) that Elisabeth conceived, it was now the month of November. Already we have studied St. Matthew's account (i. 18-25) of our Lord's miraculous birth; and it is remarkable that whereas he tells the story from Joseph's point of view, St. Luke tells it from Mary's. The difference is characteristic of our Evangelist, who, ever regardful of the feeble and despised, evinces throughout his narrative a peculiar sympathy with womenfolk, rescuing from oblivion numerous incidents illustrative of our Lord's kindness toward them and their devotion to Him. It appears that in his diligent research he conversed with those women who had known Him in the days of His flesh, and obtained from them the precious reminiscences which so enrich his Gospel; and this story he derived from the circle of Mary's intimates, if not indeed from her own lips.

Observe how he introduces the story. (1) It is not without special significance that here also it is the angel Gabriel that brings the tidings. For in Jewish literature he is represented not merely as the messenger of mercy but as the angel who presided over the elemental forces, the fire and thunder and the ripening of the fruits of the earth. He was identified with "the Spirit of Holiness," the creative Spirit, whence it is written in the Talmud that he was present at the marriage of Adam and Eve, that they might "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." And so his introduction here affirms the truth already proclaimed by St. Matthew that our Lord's humanity, "born in the Virgin of the Holy Spirit," was a fresh creation, untainted by hereditary corruption. (2) It is a question whether "of the house of David" refers to Joseph or the Virgin. Grammatically it may belong to either or indeed to both; and the

latter is most probable. For not only is it affirmed by St. Matthew (i. 20) that Joseph was "a son of David" but it is presently reaffirmed by St. Luke when he writes (ii. 4) that "he was of the house and lineage of David," where for "he" the ancient Syriac Version has "they both," Joseph and Mary alike, confirming the double reference here. And thus our Lord, though not the son of Joseph, was nevertheless, as the Apostle declares (Rom. i. 3), "born of the seed of David according to the flesh."

Observe the angel's salutation: "Hail, thou that art highly favoured!" The Latin Version has "full of grace"—an unfortunate rendering largely responsible for mediæval Mariolatry. The Greek word occurs in the New Testament in only one other passage (Eph. i. 6), where the Authorised Version has "the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." Hence the marginal rendering here "graciously accepted." But this is an impossible rendering. The verb signifies "bestow grace upon," "endue with grace"; and what the Apostle says is "His grace which He graciously bestowed upon us" or "wherewith He graced us." Hence according to the margin's alternative rendering our text should read "much graced"; and so it is written presently (ver. 30) "thou hast found favour" or rather "grace with God." The best authorities omit "Blessed art thou among women," interpolated here from ver. 42, and for "when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying" read simply "she was troubled at the saying." Even so it is implied that she was alarmed by the vision as well as perplexed by the salutation, since the angel proceeds to soothe her "fear" by explaining what his salutation meant. It was an intimation that she would give birth to the Messiah, the Promised Saviour—"the Son of God," "the Son of David," "the King of Israel."

The explanation merely increased her perplexity. "How shall this be," said she, "seeing I know not a man?" It is generally assumed that here as so often in Holy Scripture

(cf. Mt. i. 25) "know" denotes sexual intercourse; and what then did Mary mean? Was she thinking merely of her present condition—espoused but yet unmarried? In that case she would not have said "I know not" but "I have never known a man." And how could she so construe the promise? Espoused as she was, she would surely understand it as an intimation of the issue of her approaching union. Here is a long-standing difficulty, and two solutions have been proposed. (1) A patristic and mediæval interpretation, still approved by the Romanists, takes Mary's question as "referring to the future, and indicating a fixed resolution, or vow, to preserve perpetual virginity." But then she must have said not "I know not" but "I shall never know." (2) A ruthless device of modern criticism cuts the knot by regarding vers. 34, 35, notwithstanding the solid attestation of manuscripts and ancient authorities, as an interpolation, thus eliminating from the narrative the unwelcome mystery of our Lord's miraculous birth and making Him the child of Joseph and Mary by ordinary generation.

The difficulty disappears when the verb "known" is understood here in its ordinary sense. What puzzled Mary was the promise not merely that she should bear a son but that she should bear such a son. She was a peasant maiden and her betrothed a plain artisan, and how could he beget of her a princely child, the heir to David's throne? "How shall this be," she exclaimed, "seeing I know not a man ——" Here she breaks off. She would have continued: "a man who could get me such a son?"; but the angel interrupted her and explained how it would come to pass: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee (cf. Ac. i. 8), and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee," like the bright cloud on the Mount of Transfiguration (cf. Mt. xvii. 5; Mk. ix. 7; Lk. ix. 34).

Observe what follows. "Of the" is lacking in the best authorities, and its intrusion conceals the essential truth of the Virgin Birth—that the Holy Child was "begotten in



Mary" not "of her" but, as St. Matthew affirms, "of the Holy Spirit" (cf. exposition of Mt. i. 18-25). On its omission the sentence is most naturally construed not, with the Revisers, "that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God" but rather "the Holy Thing begotten shall be called the Son of God." See what this means. "The Son of God" was a Messianic title synonymous in Jewish parlance with "the King of Israel" (see exposition of Mt. iii. 17); and the Jews had no expectation that the Messiah would be divine. They conceived Him merely as a mighty son of David who should restore the ancient kingdom in more than its ancient glory. And here it is intimated that He would be "the Son of God" in a deeper sense—not simply because He would be the son of David, the King of Israel, but because He would be the Eternal Son of God Incarnate. "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also the Holy Thing begotten shall be called 'the Son of God.'"

When our Version, following Wycliffe, styles Elisabeth Mary's "cousin" (ver. 36), it employs the word in the old English sense of "kinswoman," so frequent in Shakespeare. Their relationship is undefined, but evidently it was somewhat remote since the families, dwelling far apart, held little intimacy even after they were thus singularly associated, inasmuch that, when John met our Lord at the Jordan thirty years later, he did not know Him (cf. Jo. i. 33)—a circumstance which is explained not only by the speedy demise of his aged parents but by the seclusion of the young prophet in the wilderness (cf. ver. 80). The purpose of the angel's intimation to Mary of her kinswoman's experience was twofold. (1) It was a confirmation of her faith. The lesser miracle was a pledge of the greater; for, as it is written in the Greek Version of the Scriptures (Gen. xviii. 14), "with God nothing shall be impossible" or rather, according to the true text, "not impossible shall be any word from



God.” (2) It directed her to a haven in her inevitable disquietude. For who, especially in Nazareth, that town of evil reputation (cf. Jo. i. 46), would credit her story? She would confide it to her parents, Joachim and Anna as tradition names them; and they would believe her and approve of her paying a visit to their kinswoman and finding with her at once wise counsel and a refuge from slanderous tongues.

## MARY AND ELISABETH

i. 39-56

39 *And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda;*

40 *And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.*

41 *And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:*

42 *And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.*

43 *And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?*

44 *For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.*

45 *And blessed is she \*that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which told her from the Lord.*

46 *And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord.*

47 *And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.*

48 *For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.*

49 *For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.*

50 *And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.*

51 *He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.*

52 *He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.*

\* Or, which believed that there.

(174)

53 *He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.*

54 *He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy;*

55 *As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.*

56 *And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.*

SHE made the long journey from Galilee to Judæa where Zacharias and Elisabeth had their home at—not “a city of Judah” but—“City of Judah,” a proper name, if indeed the place be rightly identified with the modern *Khirbet el-Jehud*. Since she had left home in haste, her arrival was unexpected, and her salutation” of her kinswoman was more than a bare greeting. She had to introduce herself and explain her errand. She told of the angel’s appearing, her alarm, her wonderment, and how she had been brought to “behave,” as the margin rightly has it, “that there should be a performance” or rather “accomplishment (a word found again in the New Testament only in Heb. vii. 11, where it is translated “perfection”) of those things which were told her from the Lord”—“that the things should have accomplishment which had been spoken unto her from the Lord.” Her story greatly moved Elisabeth. These six months she and her husband had been pondering their marvellous experience, not merely the gift of a child in their old age and his high destiny but far more the promised advent of the Redeemer, and had been questioning whence He should arise. And now in the maiden’s story she hears the answer. She throbbed with emotion, and her quick burden stirred within her like Rebecca’s (cf. Gen. xxv. 22). It was a natural happening, but she construed it as the joyous leaping of her unborn babe to greet the mother of his Lord.

It was an exceeding comfort for Mary to be thus received

and established in her faith; and it set her heart a-singing. Not her heart alone, says the Evangelist, but her lips; and the song which he puts in her mouth is that glorious canticle which from its first word in the Latin Version is known as the *Magnificat*. It may be worth while, in view of somewhat freakish modern approvals of the suggestion, to observe here that contrary to the unanimous testimony of the Greek manuscripts the song is ascribed by three Old Latin manuscripts and, though dubiously, several ancient writers not to Mary but to Elisabeth. Surely it was Mary's on its own evidence; for what lips but hers could have sung "Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed"? Nor it is doubtful how the confusion arose. For it would seem that the Evangelist wrote simply "And *she* said" (ver. 46), and the song was, thoughtlessly though not unnaturally, taken as a continuation of Elisabeth's joyful acclamation. It was, then, Mary's song, but certainly she did not pour it forth on the impulse of the moment. It may be that she wrote it afterwards, but it is more probable that, like the other hymns which adorn his Idyll of the Nativity—the *Benedictus* (vers. 68-79) and the *Nunc Dimittis* (ii. 29-32)—it was composed by the Evangelist, who was a true poet as well as a literary artist, the first of the long succession of Christian hymn-writers.

It needs no interpretation, and it were almost sacrilege to meddle with the exquisite phrasing of our noble Version, endeared as it is by long use in the Church's praise. Observe merely (1) that "He hath holpen" (ver. 54) is in the original the same word which St. Paul employed in his farewell to the Ephesian Elders at Miletus when he said (Ac. xx. 35): "So labouring, ye ought to *support* the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." (2) "As He spake unto our fathers" (ver. 55) is a parenthesis, "to Abraham and to his seed" depending not on "He spake"

but on "remembrance of His mercy." The Incarnation was the fulfillment of God's ancient promise and His ancient mercies, proving that He was "mindful of His covenant" and had not "forgotten to be gracious." (3) The Gospel was borne into the world on a flood of song. It was "good tidings of great joy," and it set men singing. It "put a new song in their mouths, even praise unto our God"; yet that song was old as well as new—an old song with a new meaning. Look at this song of Mary. It is an echo of Old Testament praises, especially the ancient song of Hannah (cf. 1 Sam. ii. 1-10), whence, it may be remarked, is derived the chief argument for ascribing it not to Mary but to Elisabeth, a barren woman who had been blessed with a child beyond her hope (compare vers. 46, 47 with 1 Sam. ii. 1; ver. 48 with 1 Sam. i. 11, Ps. cxiii. 5, 6, Gen. xxx. 13; ver. 49 with Ps. cxi. 9; ver. 50 with Ps. ciii. 17; ver. 51 with Ps. lxxxix. 10, 2 Sam. xxii. 28; ver. 52 with Ps. cxlvii. 6, Job v. 11, xii. 19, 1 Sam. ii. 7; ver. 53 with 1 Sam. ii. 5, Pss. xxxiv. 10, cvii. 9; ver. 54 with Is. xli. 8, Ps. xcvi. 3; ver. 55 with Mic. vii. 20, Gen. xvii. 7, Dt. xi. 21, 2 Sam. xxii. 51). It was ever thus with the believers of early days. For them the Old Testament was no memorial of a dead past but the ever-living Word of God, more precious to them than to their fathers. They had been nurtured on the ancient promises and, recognising in the Gospel the fulfillment thereof, they saw a new glory in the ancient songs and sang them still with a deeper understanding and a larger gladness. "Wheresoever you turn," says St. Jerome, picturing the idyllic sweetness of his hermitage at Bethlehem, "the ploughman holding the stilt is chanting his *Hallelujah*, the sweating mower is diverting him with Psalms, and the vinedresser pruning the vines with his bill-hook is liting something of David's. These are our songs, these our love-lays." And is it not written of the redeemed in glory that the song they sing is at once "the song of

Moses and the song of the Lamb" (cf. Rev. xv. 3)—an old song ever new, a new song old as the love of God? For it is the song of redemption, and redemption is an agelong story. And therefore it is that the ancient Scriptures are still sacred and dear to the Christian heart, and the songs of Zion evermore the songs of the New Jerusalem.



## THE BIRTH OF JOHN

i. 57-80

57 Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

58 And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

59 And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child: and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.

60 And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John.

61 And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.

62 And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.

63 And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.

64 And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God.

65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these \*sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judæa.

66 And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him.

67 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,

69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;

\* Or, things.

70 *As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:*

71 *That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;*

72 *To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;*

73 *The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,*

74 *That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear.*

75 *In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.*

76 *And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;*

77 *To give knowledge of salvation unto his people \*by the remission of their sins.*

78 *Through the †tender mercy of our God; whereby the §dayspring from on high hath visited us,*

79 *To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.*

80 *And the child grew, and waxed strong in-spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.*

**I**N due time Elisabeth brought forth her son. She had concealed her condition hitherto (cf. ver. 24) lest it be derided as a senile imagination; but now there was no concealing nor would she wish to conceal "how the Lord had magnified His mercy towards her" (R.V.), and her neighbours and "cousins," that is, "kinsfolk" (cf. ver. 36), rejoiced with her. At a week old a Jewish child was circumcised and at the same time received his name, inasmuch as it was at His institution of the rite that the Lord gave Abraham and Sarah their new names (cf. Gen. xvii). It was a great occasion in a Jewish family. Zacharias would perform the rite, and thereafter, according to custom, he should have announced the child's name, repeating the formula: "Blessed be the Lord our God, who hath sanc-

\* Or, for.

† Or, bowels of the mercy.

§ Or, sun-rising, or branch.

tified us by His commandments, and commanded us to bring a child into the covenant of Abraham our father." But the latter ceremonial was perforce disused, since Zacharias was still speechless; and the company of neighbours and kinsfolk, naturally assuming that the child would as usual bear his father's name, "called" or more precisely "were calling him Zacharias." It surprised them—so reverently had she and her husband guarded the mystery of his vision in the Sanctuary (cf. ver. 13)—when Elisabeth told them that his name was John, and they "made signs," properly "nodded to his father." Why should they not have asked him openly? It may be that they were refrained from courtesy, lest they should seem to doubt her word, unless it be assumed with most of the ancient interpreters that he had been stricken deaf as well as dumb. But how then is it written presently that he "*asked* for a writing table," that is, "a writing-tablet" or, as it is in the original, "a little tablet"? It would be by signs that he asked for it; and it is reasonable to suspect here an early corruption of the text, a misplacement of the verbs. Probably the Evangelist wrote that "they asked his father how he would have him called," and "nodding assent" he wrote his answer on the "little tablet" which had been his means of communication all the nine months of his dumbness. "A poyntel" Wycliffe terms it, nor is he far amiss. For the "little tablet" was not a sheet of parchment inscribed with pen and ink but a wooden board coated with wax whereon the words were traced with a sharp *stylus* or "pointel."

The company, says the Evangelist, " marvelled all" or rather simply "all wondered" at the choice of an alien name; but a matter so trivial was presently forgotten when the old priest recovered his speech and a flood of praise poured from his long silent lips. He "was filled," it is written, "with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied," meaning not that he predicted things to come; for there is no prediction in his song, the *Benedictus*, but only exultant thanksgiving.

And in truth this is the proper meaning of "prophecy" in Holy Scripture—the out-pouring of a heart which the Holy Spirit has touched. There is no prediction in the *Benedictus* but remembrance of God's promises to Prophets and Psalmists of old and joyful recognition of their fulfilment. It was naturally thus that Zacharias, a devout Israelite who, like so many such in those dark days was waiting eagerly for "the dayspring from on high," would express his wonderment and adoration; and surely the song which he now pours forth was no sudden inspiration. It had taken shape within him as he pondered on the Lord's dealings with him during those nine months of silence.

Inevitably the scene excited lively expectation of the child's future in the breasts of the company and in all that neighbourhood where they told the story. But it quickly subsided. Zacharias and Elisabeth would not long survive, and their son presently disappeared. "He was," says the Evangelist, "in the deserts"—the lonely wilds west of the Dead Sea, a herdman and husbandman like Amos of old (see exposition of Mt. iii. 1-12). Forgotten by the world, he was not forgotten by God, who was preparing him in solitude for his appointed ministry.

## THE BIRTH OF OUR LORD

### ii. 1-7

1 *And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be \*taxed.*

2 *(And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)*

3 *And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.*

4 *And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)*

5 *To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.*

6 *And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.*

7 *And she brought forth her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.*

**S**INCE it was in November that Mary conceived, it was now the month of August; and the Evangelist here explains how it came to pass that her Child was born not in her Galilean home at Nazareth but at Bethlehem in far southern Judæa. Not the least notable achievement of the masterly statesmanship of Augustus was his institution of an imperial census, recurring at regular intervals of fourteen years and comprehending all the subject provinces and tributary kingdoms of his far-flung Empire. "There went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the world (pro-

\* Or, *inrolled.*

(183)



perly "the habitable" or "civilized world," the proud Roman designation of the Empire) should be" not "taxed" but "enrolled—that a census should be taken of all the Empire. This, the first census," St. Luke is careful to observe, "was made during Cyrenius' governorship of Syria."

What then was the year thus doubly defined? Among the papyri recently unearthed from the sand-covered ruins of the Egyptian city of Oxyrhynchus are numerous census-papers, whereof the earliest belongs to the year 20 A. D. The previous census, fourteen years earlier, had fallen in 6 A. D. (cf. Ac. v. 37); and its predecessor, which St. Luke calls the first and places during the reign of King Herod (cf. i. 5), who died in 4 B. C., would fall in the year 8 B. C. But what of his further statement that it was made "during Cyrenius' government of Syria"? P. Sulpicius Quirinius, according to his Latin denomination, was governor of Syria in 6 A. D.; and thus it seems as though our Evangelist had widely erred in his chronology. The fact is, however, that besides the civil governorship which he assumed in the year 6 A. D. Quirinius had held a military governorship of the Province in association with the civil governor P. Quintilius Varus (6–4 B. C.); and it is to this previous and memorable governorship that St. Luke here refers. And it was then that the first imperial census, decreed for the year 8, and taken in Judæa, forasmuch as King Herod was apprehensive of the resentment which it would enkindle in the patriotic breasts of his Jewish subjects, and tardily yielded to the Emperor's insistence.

It was thus in the month of August, 5 B. C., that our Lord was born at Bethlehem, the ancient city of David. It is nothing strange that Joseph should have gone thither to enroll himself, since the Jewish fashion was that the people should be registered by their tribes (cf. 2 Sam. xxiv. 2), and he was a descendant of the house of David; but it is surprising that despite her condition Mary should have accompanied him. She was not required to present herself



for registration; for the custom was, as appears from the papyrus census-papers, that each householder should enter his name and description, his residence, his property, and his household—wife, children, and slaves. It would seem, especially from St. Matthew's narrative (see exposition of Mt. ii. 1-12), that, vexed by the slanders of their neighbours at Nazareth, Joseph had resolved to migrate thence and fix his abode at his ancestral town.

It was a three days' journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, and it proved too much for Mary, though, as tradition says, she rode softly on an ass. As they approached Bethlehem, her pangs seized her, and they sought the nearest refuge. Though very ancient, it is a mere legend that this was a cave, enshrined by long devotion within the Chapel of the Nativity—a notion which originated in that prophetic scripture (Is. xxxiii. 16): "His place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks." It was, as the Evangelist says, an inn, the caravanserai of the village. Since there were many travellers on the road in those days, it was already fully occupied when they arrived late in the evening; and she had to lie down in the courtyard where the beasts were tethered. And there the Holy Child was born; and, wrapped in the baby garments which her gentle hands had fashioned in loving anticipation, He was cradled in a manger.

## THE SHEPHERDS

ii. 8-20

8 *And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping \*watch over their flock by night.*

9 *And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.*

10 *And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*

11 *For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*

12 *And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.*

13 *And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying.*

14 *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*

15 *And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, †the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.*

16 *And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.*

17 *And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.*

18 *And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.*

19 *But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.*

20 *And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.*

\* Or, the night watches.      † Gr. the men the shepherds.

(186)

IT is characteristic of truly momentous happenings that they come quietly to pass and their significance is unobserved at the moment. And so it was with the birth of our Lord, the greatest event in the history of humanity, the end of the old order and the beginning of another and better world. Its wonder was recognized in Heaven and the hosts of angels acclaimed it; but only a little company of humble men heard their jubilation, and none of the wise or the mighty ever dreamed what was befalling in their midst. An angel brought the tidings, and whither did he bear them? The throne of the world was occupied by the Emperor Augustus, but it was not to his palace in the imperial capital that the heavenly messenger sped or to his ears that he brought the tidings on that ever memorable night. His destination was, according to human reckoning, the most unlikely spot on the face of the earth. He passed by the proud lands of Italy, Greece, and Egypt, and the brilliant cities of Rome, Athens, and Alexandria, and he winged his way to the least and poorest of all lands, the little land of Palestine, the home of a despised and oppressed people. Nor was his destination there Jerusalem, the sacred capital. He did not seek the Temple and tell the glad tidings to the Chief Priest or the high court of the Sanhedrin. He passed by the Holy City and sped to the wilderness of Judæa, the lonely uplands around Bethlehem, where long ago David had shepherded the flocks of his father Jesse and Amos had tended his herds and dressed his sycomores. And there he told the tidings to a company of shepherds.

It was a remote spot in the poorest land on earth, and the recipients of the grand message were the lowliest of mankind. For in those days shepherds were ill esteemed. Hardy and brave as their business required, they were at the same time rude, ignorant, and lawless, insomuch that it was a Rabbinical precept: "Let no man make his son a muleteer, a cameldriver, a barber, a sailor, a shepherd, an innkeeper, forasmuch as their crafts are crafts of robbers." But our

Lord was the Saviour, and He came to succour the oppressed, to lift the fallen, and to cleanse the sinful; and therefore it was fitting that the tidings of His Advent should be proclaimed first of all to those shepherds in the wilderness of Judæa, those sinners of Israel. It was a proper annunciation of the Friend of sinners, a true prophecy of the Gospel of His grace.

It was night, and they were seated round their camp-fire, whiling away their vigil—according to an ancient interpretation of the phrase rendered “abiding in the field”—by playing on their shepherd-pipes, when the angel appeared and the song of the heavenly host or, as Wycliffe has it, “the heavenly knighthood” rang along the sky. And what was their song? The authorities are here evenly divided. Some have it:

Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth peace among men of good pleasure

which our Revisers questionably and somewhat weakly paraphrase “among men in whom He is well pleased.” Others have it as it runs in our Version:

Glory to God in the highest,  
And on earth peace,  
Good pleasure in men.

And surely, since choice is permitted on the score of authority, this is far preferable. How better could the salvation which our Lord achieved be defined? It glorified God; it established peace on earth; and that peace is the peace of reconciliation. Even as the Father was “well pleased” in His Beloved Son (cf. Mt. iii. 17), so is He, by reason of His Infinite Sacrifice, in every sinner who believes.

Hark! how all the welkin rings  
Glory to the King of kings!  
Peace on earth and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled!

And let us not miss a homely lesson of the story. Rude as they may have been, those shepherds were after their sort faithful men; and they had their reward. Had they been asleep, careless of their charge and heedless of the foxes and jackals prowling about the fold, they would never have seen the angels or heard the heavenly music, and would never have made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this Child, "the first Apostles of His Infant Fame."

## THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE

### ii. 21-38

21 *And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.*

22 *And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;*

23 *(As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)*

24 *And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.*

25 *And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was a man just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.*

26 *And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.*

27 *And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,*

28 *Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,*

29 *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:*

30 *For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,*

31 *Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;*

32 *A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.*

33 *And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.*



34 *And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;*

35 *(Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.*

36 *And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;*

37 *And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.*

38 *And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in \*Jerusalem.*

ON the eighth day the Child was circumcised and received His name of Jesus, the Greek form of the Hebrew Joshua ("The Lord is salvation"); and three and thirty days later two other ordinances of the Law fell due. One was the mother's purification (cf. Lev. xii). Our text speaks of "her purification" (ver. 22), but the true reading is "their purification." It was a needless solicitude for the honour of the Holy Child that prompted the emendation, oblivious that whatsoever a mother touched in the days of her impurity was reckoned ceremonially unclean, and therefore her child and her husband shared her purification. The offering of purification was properly a lamb, but for poor folk "a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons" sufficed; and this was Mary's offering. The other ordinance was the redemption of the first-born (cf. Ex. xiii. 2, 11-15; Lev. xxvii. 26, 27; Num. xviii. 15-19). All firstlings were the Lord's, and while the firstlings of a clean beast was laid on the altar, a first-born child must be redeemed "for the money of five shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary."

\* Or, *Israel*.

Jerusalem was but five miles distant from Bethlehem, and thither Joseph and Mary repaired with the Child that they might perform those devout offices in the Temple. The talk of what had happened on that wonderful night forty days ago (cf. vers. 17-20) must have reached the Holy City, and however lightly regarded by others, it would appeal to those believing hearts which in that sorrowful time clung to the ancient promises and were looking for "the consolation of Israel." To this order belonged Simeon, and not only had he that blessed hope before him but he had attained an assurance that he would live to witness its fulfilment. "It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death ere he had seen the Lord's Messiah." Observe the Evangelist's language here. When he says "it had been revealed," he employs a verb difficult to reproduce precisely in English. It is the same which St. Matthew uses in his story of the Nativity (cf. ii. 12, 22), where our Version has "warned of God"; and its idea appears when we understand that it signified properly in the active voice "do business," and so in a religious sense "do business with God." In pagan literature it was used of "consulting a divine oracle" for guidance in perplexity, and in Jewish and Christian parlance of "doing business at the Throne of Grace." In the passive it denoted the divine response, God's gracious dealing with a soul that deals with Him. Hence it appears what the revelation was which had been vouchsafed to Simeon by the Holy Spirit. It was his faith's persuasion that the desire of his heart would surely be fulfilled.

And now, an old man, weary and longing for rest, he was eagerly expectant of the consummation which would be the signal for his departure. He was there engaged in his accustomed devotion when Joseph and Mary presented themselves in the sacred court. He heard their converse with the priest, and with the story of the shepherds in his mind he recognised them. He took the Child in his arms

and blessed God in a song of praise which had shaped itself in his wistful heart and which reveals how deeply he had pondered the ancient promises, discovering therein a truth which Jewish minds were slow to acknowledge—that the Messiah would be the Saviour not of Israel alone but of the despised Gentiles too (cf. Is. xxv. 7, xl. 5, xlii. 6, xlv. 13, xlix. 6, lii. 10).

Now lettest Thou Thy slave depart, O Lord,  
 according to Thy word in peace,  
 For that mine eyes hath seen Thy salvation  
 which Thou hast prepared before the face of all the peoples,  
 A light for the unveiling of the Gentiles  
 and the glory of Thy people Israel.

And he had recognized moreover a yet deeper truth whereof he proceeded to forewarn Mary—that He would be a Man of Sorrows, a suffering Saviour.

Anna—the Greek form of the Hebrew Hannah—was a noted personage in the Holy City. Her age was remarkable. Our Version makes her some eighty-four, but she was still older according to the proper construction of the Evangelist's words. "She was," he says, "of a great age (literally "advanced in many days"), having lived with a husband for seven years from her virginity and by herself as a widow as many as eighty-four years." For seven years a wife and eighty-four a widow, she was now well over a hundred years of age. Moreover, she was of honorable lineage, reckoning her descent from the ancient tribe of Asher, and of godly parentage, if indeed it counts for anything that her father had borne the significant name of Phanuel or Penuel, "Face of God" (cf. I Chr. iv. 4, viii. 25). And she had profited by her gracious heritage and her experience of sorrow. For she was a saint, an exemplar of holy widowhood (cf. I Tim. v. 5), breathing an atmosphere of devotion. And she was a prophetess, testifying of the grace which had blessed her own soul and the

hope which gladdened her heart. See the contrast betwixt her and Simeon. Weary of life, when he had seen the Saviour, he went home to die; but, older though she was than he and more acquainted with grief, "languor was not in her heart, weakness was not in her word, weariness not on her brow." Without song or discourse "she gave thanks unto God" and hastened to tell "all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem" (cf. R.V.) how their hope had been fulfilled.

## THE HOLY CHILD'S FIRST PASSOVER

ii. 39-52

39 *And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.*

40 *And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.*

41 *Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.*

42 *And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.*

43 *And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.*

44 *But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.*

45 *And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.*

46 *And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.*

47 *And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.*

48 *And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.*

49 *And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*

50 *And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.*



51 *And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.*

52 *And Jesus increased in wisdom and \*stature, and in favour with God and man.*

**J**UST as St. Matthew, the Jewish Evangelist, telling the story of the Nativity as it circulated in Jerusalem, makes no express mention of the Holy Family's previous connection with Nazareth, so St. Luke, telling it as he had heard it perhaps from Mary's own lips and certainly from her intimates, those Galilean women who so honoured her for the dear Lord's sake, touches lightly on their sojourn in Judæa, viewing it as a mere interlude and hastening to announce their return "to their own city Nazareth." It is an evidence of this solicitude that here (ver. 39) he leaps over the episode of their flight to Egypt (cf. Mt. ii); and surely it prohibits the ascription of his silence to either ignorance or unbelief thereof that he makes a like omission in his story of Saul of Tarsus, where in his haste to bring the erewhile persecutor on the scene as an Apostle of the Lord he leaves unrecorded in the Book of Acts so momentous an episode as his retreat to the desert of Arabia (cf. Gal. i. 17).

Of our Lord's childhood, youth, and early manhood at Nazareth, that long interval of thirty years which legend-mongers have embellished with foolish and mischievous imaginations, St. Luke alone of our Evangelists has preserved a record, fragmentary indeed yet exceeding precious, and all the more that he expressly attests its derivation from the fragrant store of Mary's loving remembrance (cf. ver. 51). First, in tacit contrast with the apocryphal fables of a child who was no child but a prodigy omnipotent and omniscient from the very womb, he portrays in a radiant sentence the unfolding of a truly human life toward its divine ideal: "the Child grew and gathered strength and ever ful-

\* Or, *age*.



ler wisdom, and God's grace was upon Him." And then in a profoundly significant story he displays the consummation. At twelve years old a Jewish boy was reckoned, in Rabbinical phrase, "a son of the commandment"; and on attaining that age "the boy Jesus," as the Evangelist here styles Him (ver. 43 R. V.), since He was "a child" no longer, accompanied Joseph and Mary on the annual pilgrimage to the Feast of the Passover in the Holy City. At the close of the sacred week the troop of Galilean worshippers set forth on the homeward journey. The custom was for the men and women to travel in separate bands; and since each naturally supposed that He was with the other, neither Joseph nor Mary missed the boy until they reached the first stage where they halted for the night. They searched the whole caravan for Him, and next morning they retraced their steps, making inquiry all the way; and at length on the third day they found Him in the Rabbinical College, "the House of Interpretation" as it was called, within the Temple-precincts, among the disciples who sat cross-legged on the floor, in oriental fashion, round the dais whence the Rabbis taught, "powdering themselves," as the phrase was, "with the dust of the feet of the wise." It was customary for the disciples not merely to listen but to propound their difficulties; and Jesus in His eager interest was putting questions. He was the youngest of them all, since the age for entering the college was fifteen years; yet teachers and scholars alike were "amazed at His understanding and His answers."

His reply to Mary's remonstrance is our Lord's first recorded saying; and unfortunately there is some uncertainty regarding the proper interpretation thereof. It lies in the phrase "about My Father's business," which is in the original "in the things of my Father," "in the things that ben of my fadir" (Wycliffe). The familiar rendering of our Version is indeed grammatically possible, but it misses the Greek idiom. For example, where Joseph

says (Gen. xli. 51) "God hath made me forget all my toil and all my father's house," the Greek Version has "all the things of my father." And so here, when Jesus said "in the things of My Father," He meant and all who heard Him would understand Him as meaning "in My Father's House." Construing it thus, observe how appropriately and largely significant is His answer to Mary's remonstrance. The Holy Child had most naturally been taught, as the Evangelist had repeatedly and pointedly indicated (cf. vers. 27, 33 R.V., 41), to regard Joseph as His father and call him by that name so well merited by his fostering care. "My child," said Mary, "why didst Thou thus to us? Behold, Thy father and I have been seeking Thee in sore distress." "Why is it," He replied, "that ye were seeking Me? Did ye not know that I must needs be in My Father's House?" God was His Father, and the Temple was His Father's House (cf. Jo. ii. 16). Why then should they have been so anxious? They should have known where to seek Him; for where should a child be but in his father's house?

It was a gentle and almost playful retort; yet there was in it a profoundly serious purpose, bespeaking as it did a momentous experience which had been vouchsafed to the Holy Child amid the solemnities of the Holy Week, nothing less than the discovery of His divine kinship and His redemptive mission. It is an ancient belief which has been held not only by philosophers like Plato but by not a few of the Church's wisest and holiest teachers, that since the soul is eternal, "our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting." We come hither "from God, who is our home," not "in entire forgetfulness" but with "shadowy recollections" of "that imperial palace whence we came." "Heaven lies about us in our infancy"; but the vision is dimmed as "shades of the prison-house" close upon us, until at length it "dies away and fades into the light of common day." This may be a fancy as regards us, but it is more than a fancy as regards our Blessed Lord and it serves to illumine for us the in-

effable mystery of His Incarnation. For He was the Eternal Son of God, who resigned the glory which He had with the Father before the world was and became truly man for us men and our salvation, sharing our human limitations and our mortal infirmities. Yet He was pursued by "shadowy recollections" of the glory which He had left; and in His pure soul "the visionary gleam" was never clouded by the shadow of sin, but like the light of dawn shone more and more unto the perfect day (cf. Pr. iv. 18 R.V.), revealing to Him Who He was and whence and wherefore He had come. From that momentous day when in the solemnities of the holy feast which at once commemorated Israel's ancient deliverance and foreshadowed a nobler redemption, He read the answer to the wonderings and questionings of His sinless soul, Jesus knew his heavenly origin, His divine kinship, and His redemptive mission. It made no immediate change in His outward estate. He returned home to Nazareth, and being now twelve years old, the age when a Jewish boy was put to a trade, He took His place in Joseph's workshop. But henceforth all was changed for Him within; and the ensuing eighteen years lowly and loving toil wrought in Him an even deeper understanding of His Father's will. He "increased," says the Evangelist, "in wisdom and stature" or rather "made progress in wisdom and age"—the same words which St. Paul employs when he tells (cf. Gal. i. 14 R.V.) how in his Rabbinical studies he "*advanced* beyond many of his own *age*"—"and in grace with God and men."



OUR LORD'S CALL

iii-iv. 13





## THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

### iii. 1-22

1 *Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituræa and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene,*

2 *Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.*

3 *And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;*

4 *As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.*

5 *Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth;*

6 *And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.*

7 *Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?*

8 *Bring forth therefore fruits \*worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.*

9 *And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.*

10 *And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?*

11 *He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.*

\* Or, meet for.

12 *Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?*

13 *And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.*

14 *And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, \*Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your †wages.*

15 *And as the people were ‡in expectation, and all men §mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not;*

16 *John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:*

17 *Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.*

18 *And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people.*

19 *But Herod the tetrarch, being reprovèd by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done,*

20 *Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.*

21 *Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,*

22 *And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.*

**S**EE exposition of Mt. iii. Observe with what precision the Evangelist dates the appearance of John (vers. 1, 2). (1) "In the fifteenth year of the reign" or rather "government of Tiberius Cæsar." On the lips of a Roman historian this would mean, according to the inclusive reckoning of the ancients, the year 28 A.D., counting from the

\* Or, *Put no man in fear.*

‡ Or, *in suspense.*

† Or, *allowance.*

§ Or, *reasoned, or, debated.*

accession of Tiberius on the death of Augustus in August, 14 A.D.; but so far as the provinces and tributary kingdoms were concerned the government of Tiberius began toward the close of the year 11, when he was associated with Augustus in the administration of the provinces and armies. Reckoned thence, the fifteenth year of his government began toward the close of the year 25. (2) The unhappy government of Pontius Pilate began, according to the chronicler Eusebius in the year 25 and lasted according to Josephus for ten years. (3) Herod Antipas and Philip were two of the sons of King Herod the Great among whom under the title of Tetrarch his territory was apportioned after his death in 4 B.C. Of Lysanias little is now known save that his Tetrarchy of Abilene passed in the year 37 under the dominion of Herod Agrippa I. and Herod who killed James the brother of John with the sword and imprisoned Peter (cf. Ac. xii. 1-3). (4) As we have already seen (cf. exposition of Mt. xxi. 23-32), Caiaphas had been, since the year 18, the acting High Priest, while Annas his father-in-law, though merely High Priest *emeritus*, had since his demission of office in the year 15 retained a predominant influence.

It appears from St. Matthew's report that the stern invective "Brood of vipers! who warned you?" was addressed directly to a company of jealous Pharisees and Sadducees who approached while John was preaching to the multitude, and he quotes the indignant apostrophe as illustrating the sternness of the prophet's preaching of repentance; and then he proceeds to show by a series of examples how powerfully it operated in the awakening of sinners. "What then are we to do?" asked "the people," literally "the multitudes," the ordinary folk. And in the spirit of the prophets of old (cf. Is. i. 16, 17) he inculcated the grace of compassion, the duty of charity.

'Tis not enough to weep my sins;

'Tis but one step to Heaven:

When I am kind to others, then  
I know myself forgiven.

Again, when it was publicans or taxgatherers that put the question, his answer was not a condemnation of their calling, odious as it was to the Jews (cf. Mt. ix. 9-13), but a prohibition of injustice in its prosecution: "Exact nothing beyond your fixed tariff." The question was put also, not by "the soldiers," but by "men in military service." These were Jews, since it was to Jews that the Baptist preached his message of repentance in view of the Messiah's advent; and doubtless they belonged to the military forces which the Tetrarchs maintained for the defence of their territories against aggression and for the suppression of internal disorder, especially in the business of taxation. As in the case of the publicans John did not reprobate their calling or require them to abandon it but merely censured their misconduct therein in three notorious particulars: the bullying of defenceless civilians, as in the matter of forced service (cf. Mt. v. 41); blackmailing, this being the significance of the phrase here rendered "accuse falsely"; and grumbling about their pay.

The "musing" or rather "reasoning" of the multitude whether John might be "the Christ," the Messiah (cf. Jo. i. 19, 20), evinces not only how general was the expectation in those days of national humiliation that, as "the darkest hour precedes the dawn," the Promised Deliverer was surely at hand, but how powerful was the impression which the prophet had created, since he is no wise answered to the prevailing ideal of the Messiah; he was no royal Son of David nor did he work any miracle (cf. Jo. x. 41). And it is to bring this out more clearly by showing how he stirred not the multitude alone but the rulers, both religious and civil, that the Evangelist anticipates the issue by telling here parenthetically of his arrest by Herod Antipas (cf. Mt. iv. 12, xiv. 3).

In his story of our Lord's Baptism St. Luke adds two significant touches to the narratives of St. Matthew and St. Mark. (1) When the heavenly attestation was vouchsafed, Jesus was "praying" on the bank of the river; and (2) the Holy Spirit descended on Him not merely "as a dove" but "in a bodily form." It was an actual dove and not simply a spiritual effusion. Not, however, that the Holy Spirit was thus incarnated. See exposition of Mt. iii. 16.



## THE GENEALOGY OF OUR LORD

### iii. 23-38

23 *And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli,*

24 *Which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi, which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Janna, which was the son of Joseph,*

25 *Which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Amos, which was the son of Naum, which was the son of Esli, which was the son of Nagge,*

26 *Which was the son of Maath, which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Semei, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Juda,*

27 *Which was the son of Joanna, which was the son of Rhesa, which was the son of Zorobabel, which was the son of Salathiel, which was the son of Neri,*

28 *Which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Addi, which was the son of Cosam, which was the son of Elmodam, which was the son of Er,*

29 *Which was the son of Jose, which was the son of Eliezer, which was the son of Jorim, which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi,*

30 *Which was the son of Simeon, which was the son of Juda, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Jonan, which was the son of Eliakim,*

31 *Which was the son of Melea, which was the son of Menan, which was the son of Mattatha, which was the son of Nathan, which was the son of David,*

32 *Which was the son of Jesse, which was the son of Obed, which was the son of Booz, which was the son of Salmon, which was the son of Naasson,*



33 *Which was the son of Aminadab, which was the son of Aram, which was the son of Esrom, which was the son of Phares, which was the son of Juda,*

34 *Which was the son of Jacob, which was the son of Isaac, which was the son of Abraham, which was the son of Thara, which was the son of Nachor,*

35 *Which was the son of Saruch, which was the son of Ragau, which was the son of Phalec, which was the son of Heber, which was the son of Sala,*

36 *Which was the son of Cainan, which was the son of Arphaxad, which was the son of Sem, which was the son of Noe, which was the son of Lamech,*

37 *Which was the son of Mathusala, which was the son of Enoch, which was the son of Jared, which was the son of Maleleel, which was the son of Cainan,*

38 *Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.*

**I**N dealing with the genealogy which St. Matthew prefixes to his Gospel (cf. i. 2-17) we were confronted by the question wherefore the Evangelist should have thought fit to exhibit our Lord's descent through Joseph when, as he immediately proceeds to relate, Joseph was not His father after the flesh. And here the question is the more insistent, inasmuch as St. Luke is careful to explain that Joseph's paternity was merely a popular supposition (cf. ver. 23), thus expressly intimating that he had quite another purpose in view than the tracing of our Lord's human lineage. And the wonder grows when we compare the two genealogies. For they are widely divergent. Not merely do they move in opposite directions, one downward and the other upward, but St. Matthew reckons twenty-six generations between David and Jesus and St. Luke forty-one; and while from Abraham to David they coincide in the main, thereafter Salathiel and Zorobabel are the only correspondent names. Indeed they part company at the very outset, Joseph's father being, according to St. Matthew, Jacob and, according to St. Luke, Heli.

Reconciliation has been attempted along two lines. (1) The patristic theory, originated by Julius Africanus early in the third century, was that Joseph was the son of a levirate marriage (cf. Mt. xxii. 24), Jacob being his actual and Heli his legal father. (2) Toward the close of the fifteenth century it was suggested that, whereas St. Matthew traces our Lord's descent through Joseph, St. Luke traces it through Mary. This was the theory of the post-Reformation interpreters; but it is ruled out by the fact that in reckoning descent the Jews took no account of maternal ancestry and by St. Luke's express statement "being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph" (ver. 23).

The truth is that, if we seek thus to reconcile the genealogies, we do but lose our labour and miss their real purpose. For they are merely popular accounts of our Lord's human antecedents woven by the reverence of the primitive believers, and their purpose was purely religious. As we have seen, St. Matthew's is the genealogy which grew up in the Church at Jerusalem; and it displays Him as the Messiah by tracing His descent first from Abraham, the father of the faithful, the repository of the Covenant and the promise, and then from David, the great King of Israel. On the other hand, that of St. Luke, the Gentile Evangelist, loosely constructed of various Old Testament data, is the genealogy which took shape among the Gentile believers; and its purpose appears when we observe how it traces our Lord's descent beyond David and beyond Abraham back to Adam, the first head of the race. Nor does it stop there. It takes a further leap—from earth to Heaven: "the son of Adam, which was the son of God." Thus, says Dr. Samuel Cox, "the pedigree is of immense value, if for nothing else, yet for this, that it connects the second Adam with the first, that it places a son of God at either end of the list of names; that it makes *us* out to be the children of God both by nature and by grace, by birth and by second birth. For, of course, if Adam was the son of God, we are all the chil-

dren of God, since we are all children of Adam; there is a divine element in our nature as well as a human element, a capacity for life and holiness as well as a liability to sin and death." It was to recreate us after the divine image in which we were created, and to reinstate us in our lost birth-right that the Redeemer came; and most fitly therefore does the Evangelist introduce this genealogy here in telling us how on the bank of the Jordan after some thirty years of preparation He heard and obeyed the heavenly call.

## HIS TEMPTATION

### iv. 1-13

1 *And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,*

2 *Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.*

3 *And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.*

4 *And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.*

5 *And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.*

6 *And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.*

7 *If thou therefore wilt \*worship me, all shall be thine.*

8 *And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

9 *And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence:*

10 *For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee:*

11 *And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.*

12 *And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*

\*Or, fall down before me.

13 *And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.*

SEE exposition of Mt. iv. 1-11. Where St. Matthew has "He was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness," St. Luke has, according to the true reading, "led in the Spirit in the wilderness," meaning that all the forty days of His wanderings there He was directed and controlled by the Spirit (cf. 1 Cor. xii. 3 R.V.) who had "filled" Him at His baptism. Again, where St. Matthew has "command that these stones become loaves," St. Luke has more definitely "command this stone that it become a loaf"—one of the lumps of limestone littering the mountainside. Again, where St. Matthew has simply "sheweth Him all the kingdoms," St. Luke adds "in a moment" or "instant (literally "a prick" as with the point of a needle) of time," meaning that the vision was not an actual panorama but a flash of imagination. Finally, observe our Evangelist's concluding comment (ver. 13), which should read thus: "And when the Devil had exhausted every sort of temptation, he withdrew from Him until further opportunity." Those three suggestions which assailed our Lord in the wilderness, represented all the various expedients which in one form or another appealed to Him in the prosecution of His Messianic ministry. For example, the temptation to relieve His physical necessity by turning a stone into a loaf recurred whenever His frail humanity shrank from drinking the cup of suffering and He would fain have put it from Him and sought an easier way; the vision of the kingdoms of the world was continually presented to Him by the enthusiasm of the multitude who were ready to acclaim Him King and set Him on the throne of His father David (cf. Jo. vi. 15); and the suggestion that He should win faith by precipitating Himself from the Pinnacle of the Temple was repeated in the frequent demand of the rulers for "a sign from Heaven" in attestation of His claims.





## THE GALILEAN MINISTRY

iv. 14-ix. 50



## SERMON IN THE SYNAGOGUE OF NAZARETH

### iv. 14-30

14 *And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.*

15 *And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.*

16 *And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.*

17 *And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,*

18 *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,*

19 *To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.*

20 *And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.*

21 *And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.*

22 *And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?*

23 *And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.*

24 *And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.*

25 *But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in*

*the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land;*

*26 But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.*

*27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.*

*28 And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,*

*29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the \*brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.*

*30 But he passing through the midst of them went his way,*

**I**T is very significant that St. Luke has antedated this incident by over a year. It is the story of the first visit which our Lord paid to Nazareth in the course of His public ministry; and on the evidence of St. Matthew (cf. xiii. 54-58) and St. Mark (cf. vi. 1-6) it fell early in the second year of His ministry. He was thus tardy in visiting the town where He had been brought up and where Mary and the rest of her family still resided, forasmuch as He recognised how little likelihood there was of His message being welcomed there, not merely because, as the Jewish proverb had it, "no prophet is accepted in his own country" but because the Nazarenes were a rude folk (cf. Jo. i. 46) and even His own kinsmen according to the flesh were jealous of His fame and rejected His claims (cf. Mk. iii. 21; Jo. vii. 5). And therefore He waited until He had proved His credentials elsewhere; and then He visited Nazareth in the hope that He would now win a hearing.

Why is it then that St. Luke has brought the incident forward and placed it here at the very outset of his narrative? His design, like St. Matthew's (cf. exposition of Mt. viii. 1-17), was not to write a journal of our Lord's ministry but to show what manner of person He was while He dwelt

\* Or, *edge*.

among men; and therefore he arranged his material topically, grouping incidents and sayings not after their chronological sequence but as they served to illustrate His character and His purposes. He was the Gentile Evangelist, a disciple and friend of St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles (cf. Introduction, p. xx); and, imbued with the spirit of his teacher, he recognised our Lord as the Saviour of sinners. What was the keynote of St. Paul's teaching? It was "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." The word occurs no less than ninety-eight times in the Pauline epistles. It occurs but fifty-five times in all the rest of the New Testament; and it is significant that, whereas it is never found in the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark and never in the body of St. John's Gospel though thrice in its prologue (cf. i. 14, 16, 17), it occurs eight times in St. Luke's Gospel and seventeen times in his Book of Acts. St. Luke's is the Pauline Gospel, and its keynote is Grace; and inasmuch as the story of His visit to Nazareth, telling of "the words of grace which proceeded out of His mouth" (ver. 22 R. V.), most strikingly exemplifies this His supreme characteristic, it is placed here at the beginning to serve, as it were, as the Gospel's frontispiece.

On His arrival at Nazareth our Lord's forebodings were realized. Its people were jealous of their townsman's fame (cf. Mt. xiii. 54-57; Mk. vi. 2, 3). Like His father before Him He had been a carpenter among them, and His mother Mary and His brothers and sisters were their neighbours. And why had He settled at Capernaum? Why had He not rather remained at Nazareth and wrought His miracles there? The Sabbath Day came round, and "as His custom was" He attended the synagogue and according to usage (cf. exposition of Mt. iv. 23-25) He was invited to preach. There were two scripture lessons in accordance with a prescribed lectionary, one from the Law and the other from the Prophets (cf. Ac. xiii. 15); and on this occasion the latter was from the Book of Isaiah. Thence He chose His

text, according to the Jewish fashion standing while He read it in token of reverence for the sacred Word and then sitting down to discourse (cf. Mt. v. 1). It was a gracious text (Is. lxi. 1, 2, lviii. 6), and as He read it His gracious accents arrested His audience. Every eye was fixed upon Him as He laid aside the sacred roll and sat down. "To-day," He began, "hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears." The sermon was as gracious as the text, and they felt its charm; yet no sooner was it ended than they were mastered by their miserable jealousy. He marked their glances and whisperings and, knowing well what was in their minds, He answered their grievance.

It was a kindly, half-playful answer, designed to disarm their prejudice. Their grievance, he admits, was quite natural. "Ye will surely," says He, "quote Me" not "this proverb" but "this parable, 'Physician, heal thyself.'" It was indeed a proverb, one which was in vogue all over the ancient world among the Greeks and Romans as well as the Jews; and why does He call it a parable? The Talmud has it "Physician, heal thine own limping," recalling Æsop's fable of *The Quack Frog*. "I am a physician," said the frog, "skilled in simples." "How," retorted the fox, "wilt thou save others when thou dost not heal thine own limping?" The old Phrygian's book of fables was an anthology of ancient folk-lore; and the proverb was a concise rendering of that homely and familiar apologue. "Ye will surely quote Me this parable, 'Physician, heal thyself,'" says our Lord, meaning, as He explains, that they were aggrieved at His working miracles at Capernaum rather than at His own town of Nazareth. But, he reminds them, there was another proverb that "no prophet is accepted in his own country." It was a gentle rebuke. There can be no miracle where there is no faith, and it was their unbelief that had banished Him from their midst. When men turn a blessing from their doors, it passes to others who are willing to receive it. So had it happened of old when



Elijah left idolatrous Israel and carried his grace to a heathen widow at Zarephath in the land of Zidon (cf. 1 Ki. xviii. 8-24), and again when, though there were lepers in Israel, it was Naaman the Syrian that Elisha healed (cf. 2 Ki. v.).

His conciliatory argument only enraged them. Though it was so written in the Scriptures, it offended their Jewish prejudice to hear of heathen being preferred to Israelites; and they deemed it no less than blasphemy that He should liken Himself to those great prophets. The synagogue was in an uproar. They drove Him out of the town to a precipice on the mountain beneath which it nestled, intending to hurl Him down; but on getting there they thought better of it. His dauntless bearing overawed them; perhaps too old memories softened them. He turned away, and the crowd fell back before Him and let Him pass.

## A SABBATH DAY AT CAPERNAUM

iv. 31-44

31 *And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days.*

32 *And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.*

33 *And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice,*

34 *Saying, \*Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.*

35 *And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.*

36 *And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.*

37 *And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about.*

38 *And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; and they besought him for her.*

39 *And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.*

40 *Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.*

41 *And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them suffered them not †to speak: for they knew that he was Christ.*

\* Or, Away.      † Or, to say that they knew him to be Christ.

42 *And when it was day, he departed and went into a desert place: and the people sought him, and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them.*

43 *And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.*

44 *And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee.*

**O**BERVE that a new section begins here. Punctuate with a full stop after ver. 30 and then begin a new paragraph: "And He . . . was teaching them (not "on the Sabbath days" but) on the Sabbath (the eventful first Sabbath Day of His ministry at Capernaum). And they were astonished at His teaching; for His word was invested with authority." On the healing of the demoniac (vers. 33-37) see exposition of Mk. i. 21-28; and on vers. 38-41 see exposition of Mt. viii. 14-17. On vers. 42-44 see exposition of Mk. i. 35-39, and observe two peculiarities of St. Luke's narrative. (1) Where St. Mark has (ver. 38) "for therefore came I forth," meaning that our Lord's purpose in quitting Capernaum was that He might go on a mission through Galilee, St. Luke has "for therefore was I sent" or "commissioned," giving a larger significance to His words. He had been sent into the world to preach not merely to Capernaum but to a wider audience. (2) In ver. 44 the best attested reading is "He was preaching in the synagogues" not "of Galilee" but "of Judæa," meaning not the southern province alone but, as the name denoted in Gentile parlance, "the country of the Jews," the whole of Palestine (cf. iii. 1, xxiii. 5; Ac. i. 8, ii. 9, x. 37). Thus St. Luke confirms St. John's testimony that our Lord's public ministry was not confined to Galilee but included periodic visits to Jerusalem (cf. Introduction, p. xxxii).

## THE DRAUGHT OF FISHES

### V. I-II

1 *And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret,*

2 *And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets.*

3 *And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.*

4 *Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.*

5 *And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.*

6 *And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.*

7 *And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.*

8 *When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.*

9 *For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:*

10 *And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.*

11 *And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.*

THE Evangelist now proceeds to portray by a series of incidents the progress of our Lord's ministry—His ever-widening fame and the enmity which it provoked in the

minds of the jealous rulers. The story of the draught of fishes is an amplification of the calling of Simon and Andrew, James and John, as related by St. Matthew (iv. 18-22) and St. Mark (i. 16-20); and it explains how it came to pass that they so readily obeyed His invitation to "leave all and follow Him." It was morning, and after an unsuccessful night's fishing they were putting their nets in order for the next night's venture. As He talked with them, the people gathered and so pressed about Him that He resorted to the expedient of getting into Simon's boat and thence addressing them. Then when He had done discoursing, He bade Simon "launch out into the deep." It was not merely that He might thus escape from the embarrassing crowd but that Simon and Andrew might "let down their nets for a draught." It seemed a hopeless enterprise; for it was broad day and, as Pliny tells us, night was the time for fishing. Had any other made the proposal, Simon would have scouted it; but it was Jesus who made it, and, said Simon, "at Thy word" more precisely "on the strength of Thy word I will let down" not simply "the net" but "the nets"—the full tackle.

Observe with what reserve the miracle is presented. A legend-monger would inevitably have enlarged upon its manner, but the Evangelist merely states the fact that "they enclosed a great multitude of fishes." Was it that the Lord created the fishes in the nets, or that He directed them thither, or that He knew that a shoal was there? Regardless of such curious questions the Evangelist simply relates what befell—how "their net brake" or rather "their nets began to break," "were like to break"; how Simon and Andrew, too far off shore to call, "beckoned" to their mates James and John to put off in their boat and "help them" or rather "lend them a helping hand"; and again how "they filled both the boats, so that they began to sink" or "were like to sink."

It was not the first miracle that Simon and his comrades



had witnessed; for though it occurred, as St. Mark shows, immediately on our Lord's settlement at Capernaum before that Sabbath Day when He wrought all those miracles which St. Luke has already recounted (cf. iv. 31-41), they had previously, according to St. John, witnessed His miracle at the wedding feast (ii. 1-11), those others at Jerusalem during the Passover season (ii. 23), and His healing of the nobleman's child at Cana (iv. 46-54). But none of those had touched them so close as this. Connected as it was with their familiar business and traversing their lifelong experience, it brought home to them the wonder of Him with whom they had to do. They realised that they were face to face with God. And a vision of God is ever terrible to sinful men. "Woe is me!" cried the prophet of old, "for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts" (Is. vi. 5). And even so was it with Simon. "Depart from me," he cried; "for I am a sinful man, O Lord." It is the earliest instance of the payment of divine homage to our Lord in the days of His flesh, an anticipation of the faith which waxed ever surer in the breasts of His disciples as they companied with Him, and which doubting Thomas expressed when he hailed Him, risen from the dead, as "my Lord and my God" (Jo. xx. 28).

It was through their fisher-craft that they had discovered the awful mystery of His Godhead; and thereby also He conveyed to them His gracious reassurance. He would in no wise depart from them but would rather draw them nearer to Himself and employ them as His ministers. "Fear not," said He; "from henceforth thou shalt" not merely "catch men" but "catch men alive," taking them not, as they took fish in their nets, for death but for life. The phrase, which occurs only here in the New Testament, was employed in the classics from Homer down as a military term in the sense of "giving quarter." "Take me alive, son of Atreus," is the entreaty of a vanquished warrior in the



Iliad, "and accept a worthy ransom." "The world," says Bunyan in his *Solomon's Temple Spiritualized*, "is compared to a sea; men to fishes; and the Gospel to a net. As therefore men catch fish with a net, so the Apostles caught men by their word. Nets are truly instruments of death, but the net of the Gospel doth catch to draw from death, wherefore this net is contrary, life and immortality is brought to light through this. No marvel then, if men are so glad, and that for gladness they leap like fishes in a net, when they see themselves caught in this drag of the holy Gospel of the Son of God. They are caught from death and hell, caught to live with God in glory."

## HEALING A LEPER

v. 12-16

12 *And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.*

13 *And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him.*

14 *And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.*

15 *But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.*

16 *And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.*

SEE exposition of Mt. viii. 1-4 and Mk. i. 40-45. By the story of the draught of fishes St. Luke has shown how our Lord won the allegiance of His intimates and gathered about Him a band of disciples; and now he shows how His influence was extended and His fame spread abroad. It appears from St. Mark's narrative that the healing of the leper was an incident of the mission which He made through inland Galilee after that eventful first Sabbath at Capernaum (cf. Lk. iv. 42-44); and even while introducing it here to illustrate the progress of His ministry, St. Luke expressly indicates its historical position by explaining that it happened "in a certain city" or rather "in one of the cities." Observe that, while St. Matthew and St. Mark describe the suppliant as "a leper," St. Luke, "the

beloved physician," has "a man full of leprosy." And this is no mere rhetorical embellishment; it is medical language indicating the seriousness of the case. The ancient physicians distinguished three stages of the disease: tetter or eruption (*vitiligo*) appearing in dull white spots; white leprosy, when the whiteness overspread the flesh; and black leprosy, when it assumed a livid hue. Especially in the last the patient was described by medical writers, like Hippocrates and Galen, as "full of leprosy."

## HEALING A PARALYTIC

v. 17-26

17 *And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judæa, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.*

18 *And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him.*

19 *And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus.*

20 *And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.*

21 *And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?*

22 *But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts.*

23 *Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?*

24 *But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house.*

25 *And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.*

26 *And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day.*

SEE exposition of Mt. ix. 1-8 and Mk. ii. 1-12. Observe two peculiarities of St. Luke's narrative. (1) Whereas the other Evangelists call the sufferer not, as our Version has it, "a man sick of the palsy" (Mt. ix. 2, 6; Mk. ii. 3, 5, 9, 10) but "a paralytic," he has (vers. 18, 24 R.V.) "a man that was palsied" or "paralysed." The difference is significant, inasmuch as "paralytic" was the popular phrase, while "paralysed" was the professional phrase, constantly and exclusively employed by medical writers. Here again "the beloved physician" is revealed. (2) When St. Mark says that the bearers, unable to enter through the crowd, "uncovered (literally "unroofed") the roof where He was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the litter whereon the paralytic lay," he has in view a Jewish house with its flat roof. But this would have been unintelligible to Gentile readers, accustomed to a different style of architecture. Hence, rather than enter into an elaborate and truly unprofitable explanation, St. Luke adapts the story to the Roman style. A Roman house had a tiled roof which sloped down on all sides to the centre, where there was an opening (*impluvium*) through which the rain dropped down into a cistern in the midst of the hall (*atrium*) beneath. And so St. Luke (cf. ver. 19) represents the bearers as ascending to the tiling and lowering the litter through the *impluvium*.

See how this incident exhibits the culmination at once of our Lord's popularity and of the long gathering enmity of the rulers. The former is strikingly depicted by the Evangelist in that brief but significant sentence which runs thus according to the true text of the original (ver. 17): "The power of the Lord (that is, in the Old Testament sense, the Lord God, not the Lord Jesus) was there that He (Jesus) might heal," meaning that the audience was filled with that spirit of expectant faith which makes miracles of grace possible (cf. Mt. xiii. 58; Mk. vi. 5, 6). But in the audience there were others differently disposed—that commission of Pharisees including Rabbis, learned men, the guardians and

interpreters of the sacred Law versed in doctrinal questions, who had been deputed to spy upon Him and find occasion for arraigning Him as a heretic. They "had come from," that is, "on the errand of every village of Galilee and Judæa and," adds the Evangelist, "of Jerusalem," meaning that they had been commissioned by the supreme court of the Sanhedrin as representing the religious interests of the whole country.



## OFFENCE OF LOVING SINNERS

v. 27-32

27 *And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me.*

28 *And he left all, rose up, and followed him.*

29 *And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them.*

30 *But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?*

31 *And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.*

32 *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

**H**ERE the Evangelist proceeds to show how our Lord's enemies prosecuted their inquisition. They had charged Him with the capital crime of blasphemy forasmuch as He had usurped the divine prerogative of forgiving sins, and He had put them to silence; and now they find another offence in Him. See exposition of Mt. ix. 9-13 and Mk. ii. 13-17. Observe (1) that while St. Matthew and St. Mark say simply "He *saw*," it is in the original another word that St. Luke employs, signifying not merely "He saw" but "He *beheld* a publican"—the word which St. John employs when he says (i. 14) "we beheld His glory." The sight of a sinner ready for salvation is always a glorious and glad-some spectacle in the Saviour's eyes. (2) "A great feast" is properly "a great reception," expressing Levi's resolution to honour his Saviour and confess Him openly—a royal ban-

quet and a crowd of guests. (3) For "their Scribes and Pharisees" read "the Pharisees and their Scribes" (ver. 30). These were the Sanhedrin's commissioners. Pharisees in the general term, and the Scribes, otherwise known as Rabbis or Doctors of the Law (cf. ver. 17), were the learned men of the Pharisaic order. (4) "To repentance" (ver. 32) is peculiar to St. Luke, though interpolated in the inferior manuscripts of the other Gospels (cf. Mt. ix. 13; Mk. ii. 17 R.V.). It was a most needful addition for Gentile readers, who, as St. Paul constantly found, were so prone to maintain their heathen ethic, thus bringing shame on their Christian profession and giving colour to the Judaist calumny that the Apostle's doctrine of salvation by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law issued in anti-nomianism.

## NEGLECT OF FASTING

### v. 33-39

33 *And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?*

34 *And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?*

35 *But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.*

36 *And he spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old.*

37 *And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish.*

38 *But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved.*

39 *No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.*

**S**EE exposition of Mt. ix. 14-17 and Mk. ii. 18-22. Vers. 36-38 should read: "No man teareth a piece from a new garment and putteth it as a patch on an old garment; else he will tear the new, and the patch taken from the new will not agree with the old. And no man putteth fresh wine into old wineskins; else the fresh wine will burst the skins and will itself be spilled, and the skins be destroyed. No, fresh wine should be put into new skins." The other Evangelists also record those homely and effective illustrations of the mischievous folly of that blind conservatism

which clings to the dead past and would fain perpetuate its outworn customs, forgetting that

The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

But St. Luke adds thereto a further admonition of our Lord, a most needful and salutary admonition, rebuking the wanton iconoclasm which, untouched by hallowed memories and tender associations, scorns the old. "No one," says He, "after drinking old wine desireth fresh; for he saith, The old is" not "better" but "kindly"—the word which He uses again when He says, (Mt. xi. 30) "My yoke is kindly," and which St. Paul uses when he says "Love suffereth long, and is kind" (1 Cor. xiii. 4), "Be ye kind one to another" (Eph. iv. 32). It is not a little remarkable that our Lord is here quoting a saying of another Jesus—Jesus the Son of Sirach—in his Book of Ecclesiasticus, that gem of the later Jewish literature which but for the lateness of its appearing would surely have been included in the sacred canon of the Old Testament. It is written there (ix. 10): "Forsake not an old friend; for the new is not comparable to him: as new wine, so is a new friend; if it become old, thou shalt drink it with gladness." Evidently from this and other echoes of it in His teaching (compare Mt. xi. 28–30 with Ecclus. li. 23–27; Lk. xii. 16–21 with Ecclus. xi. 18, 19; Mt. vi. 7 with Ecclus. vii. 4) our Lord knew and loved that old book.

## SABBATH-BREAKING

### vi. I-II

1 *And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands.*

2 *And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath days?*

3 *And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was an hungred, and they which were with him;*

4 *How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone?*

5 *And he said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.*

6 *And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered.*

7 *And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him.*

8 *But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth.*

9 *Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?*

10 *And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other.*

11 *And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.*

HERE our Lord's enemies find in Him another offence—that of Sabbath-breaking which, like blasphemy, was, according to the Jewish law, a capital crime. See exposition of Mt. xii. 1-14 and Mk. ii. 23-iii. 6. Observe two special features of St. Luke's narrative. (1) The phrase "the second Sabbath after the first," literally "a second-first Sabbath," is a long-standing problem. Even the Greek Fathers were puzzled by it, and it would be alike wearisome and unprofitable to adduce their manifold theorisings. "It had been simpler," says Erasmus in his caustic fashion, "to say 'I don't know'"; and indeed that was the attitude of the wiser of the ancient interpreters. "I once," says St. Jerome in his second epistle, "asked my teacher Gregory of Nazianzus to explain what is meant by 'a second-first Sabbath' in Luke; and he answered with a pretty jest. 'I will teach you on the subject,' quoth he, 'in Church where, amid the applause of the congregation, you will be compelled in spite of yourself to know what you don't know, or, depend upon it, if you are the only one silent, you will be condemned as the only fool in the congregation.' " Erasmus too tells a significant anecdote of a Professor of Theology who, being asked at a banquet by a learned man of another calling—probably Erasmus himself—what "a second-first Sabbath" in Luke meant, roundly affirmed that nothing of the sort was ever found in the Gospels. And when the inquirer asseverated that it was in Luke, "I doff my cowl," said he, "if Luke ever wrote anything of the sort." Evidently he meant that the phrase is an interpolation; and this is indeed the verdict of Textual Criticism. Our two oldest manuscripts and several others of lesser authority omit the phrase and read simply "on a Sabbath." Nor is it difficult to see how the phrase originated. In view of the ensuing "another Sabbath" (ver. 6) an early copyist wrote here "a first Sabbath"; and then another copyist, remembering the preceding "on the Sabbath Day" (iv. 31) wrote by way of correc-



tion "a second Sabbath," and the two emendations were by and by run together.

(2) In the Codex Bezaë, that important sixth century manuscript which Theodore Beza presented to the University of Cambridge in the year 1581, ver. 5 stands after ver. 10 and in its place after ver. 4 we read: "On the same day He beheld one working on the Sabbath and said to him, 'Man, if thou knowest what thou art doing, blessed art thou; but if thou knowest not, thou art accursed and a transgressor of the Law.'" It is hardly doubtful that this is an authentic saying of our Lord, who, as St. John has told us (cf. xx. 30, 31; xxi. 25), said and did in the course of His ministry far more than our Evangelists have written; and not a few of His unwritten sayings have been happily preserved, some in curious and unexpected ways. It was the custom of a careful reader in early days to enter on the margin of his treasured volume elucidations or traditional amplifications of the sacred text; and by and by in copying a volume thus annotated a scribe would frequently mistake a marginal comment for an accidental omission and incorporate it with the text. So it happened in the present instance, and this interpolation may reasonably and with a measure of confidence be regarded as a genuine saying of our Blessed Lord.

And what does it mean? It was "on the same day," the day of His encounter with the Pharisees in the cornfields, that our Lord not merely "saw" but "beheld" the surprising spectacle of "one working on the Sabbath"; and the suggestion is that His argument in His disciples' defence had emboldened the man to so flagrant a defiance of Jewish custom. Whoever he may have been, he was not a professed disciple; for our Lord did not know him, and ere He could pronounce judgment on his action He must needs learn the motive which prompted it. It might be, on the one hand, that the man had considered the question and had started work on his field by way of testifying his sympathy with our Lord and abjuring the tyranny of the Pharisaic Sabbatarian-

ism. And in this case he deserved commendation: "If thou knowest what thou art doing, blessed art thou." But it might be, on the other hand, that he had no higher motive than greed of worldly gain, and had eagerly grasped at the liberty which, as he supposed, our Lord's teaching sanctioned. And in this case he stood condemned: "If thou knowest not, thou art accursed and a transgressor of the Law."

## THE ORDINATION OF THE TWELVE

vi. 12-19

12 *And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.*

13 *And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;*

14 *Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew,*

15 *Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphæus, and Simon called Zelotes,*

16 *And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.*

17 *And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judæa and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases;*

18 *And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed.*

19 *And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.*

SEE exposition of Mt. x. 2-4 and Mk. iii. 7-10. (1) It is characteristic of St. Luke that he constantly remarks how our Lord was wont at important and difficult crises of His ministry to have recourse to prayer. Already he has told us how after His baptism He was praying when the Holy Spirit descended upon Him as a dove (iii. 21, 22), and how, when embarrassed by the multitude, "He withdrew Himself into the wilderness and prayed" (v. 16). And now again he tells us how ere taking the momentous step of

ordaining the Twelve He "went out into" not "a mountain" but "the mountain (the uplands behind the town) to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." One important manuscript omits "to God," and an old interpretation, fanciful perhaps yet suggestive, takes "prayer" as signifying here "place of prayer"—a frequent sense of the Greek word (cf. Ac. xvi. 13 R.V.). "He continued all night in His oratory"—a retreat on the hillside whither He was wont to betake Himself when He would be alone with God (cf. exposition of Mt. vi. 6). (2) For "Judas the brother of James" (ver. 16) read "Judas the son of James"—the Apostle whom St. Matthew (x. 3, where see exposition) calls Lebbæus, and St. Mark (iii. 18) Thaddæus, and whom St. John (xiv. 22) distinguishes as "Judas, not Iscariot." For "Judas Iscariot, who also was the traitor" read "Judas Iscariot, who turned traitor." (3) It is somewhat perplexing to read here, first, that our Lord "came down with them (the Twelve) and stood on a level place, and a large multitude of His disciples and a large throng of the people," and then (ver. 20) that in the midst of this eager and tumultuous assemblage He proceeded to address particularly His disciples, the newly ordained Apostles. And what is the explanation? As we have seen (cf. exposition of Mt. xiii. 10-17), the ordination of the Twelve marked a momentous departure in our Lord's ministry. Hitherto He had employed Himself with the multitude; but henceforth His supreme concern was the training of His Apostles for their high and responsible office, the continuance of His work after His departure, and He more and more withdrew Himself from the multitude and devoted Himself to a task so needful, so vital to the interests of His Kingdom and of the world which He had come to redeem. It was not a narrowing of His grace. In truth it was His concern for the world that moved Him thus in the meanwhile to withdraw Himself from the multitude and concentrate His time and care on the men whom He had chosen to achieve that supreme end.

And therefore it is that St. Luke, the Evangelist of Grace, lest we should fancy that in retreating to the hillside with the Twelve our Lord had forsaken the multitude, hastens to reassure us by transferring from its proper position at the close of the chapter and inserting here the story of His gracious dealing with the suffering multitude when He had descended again to the plain, and then resuming the narrative of His converse with the Twelve on the hillside, His address to His newly ordained Apostles,

## THE ORDINATION ADDRESS

vi. 20-49

20 *And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for your's is the kingdom of God.*

21 *Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.*

22 *Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.*

23 *Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.*

24 *But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.*

25 *Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.*

26 *Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.*

27 *But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,*

28 *Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.*

29 *And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also.*

30 *Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.*

31 *And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.*

32 *For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.*

33 *And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.*



34 *And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.*

35 *But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.*

36 *Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.*

37 *Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:*

38 *Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.*

39 *And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?*

40 *The disciple is not above his master: but every one \*that is perfect shall be as his master.*

41 *And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?*

42 *Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.*

43 *For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.*

44 *For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they †grapes.*

45 *A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.*

46 *And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*

47 *Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like:*

\* Or, shall be perfected as his master. † Gr. a grape.

48 *He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.*

49 *But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.*

SEE exposition of Mt. v. 1-16, 39-48, vii. 1-6, 15-27. Observe these peculiarities of St. Luke's report. (1) When our Lord says (ver. 26) "Woe unto you" or rather "Alas when all men shall speak well of you," He is quoting a proverbial saying. It is told, for example, of the philosopher Antisthenes, the founder of the Cynic school, that once hearing that many praised him, "Why," said he, "what evil have I done?" Our Lord was addressing His Apostles, and here He forewarns them that if they were true to Him, they would surely encounter hostility and persecution (cf. Ja. iv. 4). So it has proved in all ages. "I sufficiently rejoice," wrote Luther to Erasmus in the year 1519, "that amid Christ's other gifts this too is numbered, that you displease many; by which evidence I am wont to discriminate the gifts of God's mercy from the gifts of His anger." In a godless world enmity is the inevitable requital of faithfulness to God; yet it is our duty to refrain from needless offence (cf. 2 Cor. vi. 3) and labour to commend ourselves and rather win men than antagonise them (cf. exposition of Mt. v. ii). (2) That thrice recurring question (vers. 32-34) "What thank have ye?" is literally "What grace have ye?" It may signify either "What favour have you with God?" or "What gratitude do you merit from men?" since you are doing nothing meritorious. But our Lord is here requiring of His disciples a large generosity, inspired by heavenly grace and impossible without it; and no grace is needed for merely loving those who love us, doing good to those who do good to us, or lending where we expect repayment. Grace-

less sinners do as much. (3) When He bids us "lend" (ver. 34), He does not mean merely lending money, which is always a doubtful kindness. Indeed this was hardly possible for His Apostles, since they were themselves poor (cf. Ac. iii. 6) and He sent them forth with no money in their purses (cf. Mt. x. 9). He means rather lending the better wealth which they abundantly possessed—help, service, love. And, unlike sinners who lend "to receive as much again," they must lend freely, with no ulterior motive, "hoping," says our Version, "for nothing again." The Revisers have here "never despairing"—never losing heart when we are ill requited and desisting from the thankless endeavour; but the words rather mean "despairing of no man" (cf. R.V. marg.). The phrase occurs only here in all the New Testament; and it is natural that it should have been preserved by St. Luke the physician, since it was a physician's phrase. It is the Divine Physician who is speaking, and He bids us never pronounce any case hopeless, however discouraging, never abandon hope of any soul however obdurate.

## HEALING OF A CENTURION'S SLAVE

### vii. 1-10

1 *Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.*

2 *And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.*

3 *And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.*

4 *And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, that he was worthy for whom he should do this:*

5 *For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.*

6 *Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof:*

7 *Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.*

8 *For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto \*one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.*

9 *When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.*

10 *And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.*

**B**Y "all His sayings" is not meant the preceding discourse, which was spoken not "in the audience (literally "the ears") of the people" but to "His disciples" (cf. vi. 20)

\* Gr. *this man*.

that is, the newly ordained Apostles on the hillside. Here the Evangelist refers back to his anticipatory mention of our Lord's descent to the plain and His meeting there with "a large throng of the people, which came to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases" (vi. 17-19).

See exposition of Mt. viii. 5-13, and observe how picturesquely St. Luke amplifies the narrative. He tells how the good centurion, a representative of that class of devout Gentiles known as "the God-fearers," did not presume to approach our Lord in person, but enlisted the Jewish Elders, the Rulers of the local synagogue, to wait upon Him and present his petition. It was a distasteful errand for them, since they were our Lord's bitter enemies; yet they durst not refuse. For they were deeply indebted to the centurion, who not only, like so many of his class (cf. Ac. x. 2, 4), enriched them with his liberal offerings but had recently, with princely munificence, erected a new synagogue at his own expense. They obsequiously went his errand. It was his reverence for our Lord that prompted him to employ the mediation of those dignitaries, and it would have shocked him had he known how cavalierly they presented his request. On their lips it was no humble petition but a haughty demand. "He is worthy," said they, "that thou shouldst do him this service; for he loveth our nation, and it was he that built us the synagogue.

Unheeding their insolence, our Lord went with them. Meanwhile, however, the centurion had bethought himself. Perhaps he had mistrusted his deputies, and perhaps too he remembered the case of his townsman, that nobleman of Capernaum who had sought our Lord at Cana and begged Him to come and heal his child lying sick at home, and how the miracle had been wrought by a word across the intervening miles (cf. Jo. iv. 46-54). At any rate he despatched several friends to meet Him. "Trouble not Thyself" was his message, or rather "Weary not Thyself"—a picturesque phrase in the original, expressing the idea of travelling foot-

sore a toilsome road. It was, he felt, presumption to ask the Lord to enter his house, a mansion though it was; nor was it necessary that He should.

I am not worthy, holy Lord,  
That Thou shouldst come to me;  
Speak but the word; one gracious word  
Can set the sinner free.



## THE WIDOW OF NAIN

vii. 11-17

11 *And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people.*

12 *Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.*

13 *And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.*

14 *And he came and touched the \*bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.*

15 *And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.*

16 *And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.*

17 *And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judæa, and throughout all the region round about.*

IT is remarkable how many of the miracles of raising from the dead recorded in Holy Scripture were wrought for the sake of sorrowing women (cf. 1 Ki. xvii. 17-24; 2 Ki. iv. 18-37; Jo. xi. 1-42; Ac. ix. 36-42; Hem. xi. 35); and this moving story, told by none other of the Evangelists, is a characteristic example of those numerous evidences which St. Luke has recorded of our Lord's kindness for women-folk. Observe how the interest of the story as he tells it centres in the sorrowing mother whom, with the reserve of a literary artist, he presents to our sympathy with a single

\* Or, coffin.

(251)

touch of poignant tenderness—"the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." The city or rather "town" of Nain was situated some six miles to the south-east of Nazareth, and our Lord paid it this visit on one of those frequent occasions when He withdrew from Capernaum and went on missions through inland Galilee. It was, according to the true reading, "a while after" the healing of the centurion's slave and not, as our Version has it, "the day after"—an impossible representation, since not merely was Nain nearly thirty miles distant from Capernaum but when He approached it He was escorted by "much people" or rather "a large multitude," the folk whom He had attracted by His preaching in the course of His leisurely progress thither. Outside the town, according to the Jewish regulation, about a mile to the east thereof still lies the ancient burial-place, and as our Lord neared the gate of the town with His retinue He encountered a funeral procession on its way thither. The Jewish fashion was that the female mourners should lead the cortege, inasmuch as it was a woman who had brought death into the world; then came the bearers with their sad burden on an open bier; and after them the male mourners. The desolation of that poor mother had enlisted unusual sympathy and "much people of the city was with her." It went to our Lord's heart when He saw her thus escorted and heard the lamentation of her women-friends. "Weep not" said He and, passing on, He "touched" or rather "grasped the bier." The bearers stopped, and He addressed the lifeless form. What did He say? "Young man" or rather "My lad, I say unto thee, arise": so the Evangelist has it, seeking to reproduce not merely His words but His manner. What always impressed our Lord's hearers was the note of authority which rang in His voice (cf. Mt. vii. 29; Mk. i. 22; Lk. iv. 32); and the Evangelists seek on solemn occasions to bring this out. When a modern writer would emphasise a sentence, he underlines or italicises it, and the ancients had at least two corresponding devices.

Sometimes they would add a corroborating phrase; and an example hereof is this formula which the Evangelists so frequently employ, "I say unto thee" (cf. exposition of Mk. v. 41). And again, to lend emphasis to a word, they would reduplicate it. Examples abound on the pages of Holy Scripture. Thus, where our Version has (Is. xxvi. 3) "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace," the original, as our margin indicates, is "in peace, peace." It is remarkable that at least one important manuscript (Codex Bezae) and several ancient versions make St. Luke employ here both these devices by reading "My lad, My lad, I say unto thee, arise." What our Lord actually said was simply "My lad, arise"; but the bare words are poor and empty, and the Evangelist would have us catch His accent of tenderness and His tone of authority. It thrilled the hearts of His hearers, and it penetrated "the dull cold ear of death." "He that was dead sat up"—another of St. Luke's medical phrases, used by Greek physicians of a patient sitting up in bed (cf. Ac. ix. 40, the only other instance where it occurs in the New Testament)—"and began to speak" or rather "talk," with a suggestion of incoherence, like one suddenly aroused from sleep.

No wonder the miracle so impressed the spectators and was noised "throughout all Judæa," that is, the land of Palestine (cf. iv. 44). For not only was it His first miracle of raising from the dead but within a couple of miles of Nain lay the village of Shunem, where Elisha of old had wrought a like miracle (cf. 2 Ki. iv. 8). Hence the exclamations which passed from mouth to mouth: "They glorified God, saying, 'A great prophet hath arisen among us!' and 'God hath visited His people!'" And what of the sequel? All that is written is that the Lord "gave him to his mother." The suggestion is that the lad returned to his home and quietly resumed his interrupted life. Had he, like Lazarus, nothing to tell of his soul's experience during its sojourn to the Unseen? We can hardly refrain from wondering; and

perhaps the answer is furnished by what we have already learned (cf. exposition of ii. 39-52) of the mystery of our Blessed Saviour's Incarnation. If He brought with Him but a "shadowy recollection" of His eternal glory, what remembrance would a soul recalled to earth retain of its brief glimpse of the Unseen? Surely oblivion were then a wise, benignant, and most needful dispensation; for with a clear memory of Eternity how could one resume his mortal estate? And could he tell the story, what disquietude, what discontent, it would create!

He brings no news; he has forgot,  
 Or saw with vision weak:  
 Thou seest all our unseen lot,  
 And yet thou dost not speak.

Hold'st thou the news, as parent might  
 A too good gift, away,  
 Lest we should neither sleep at night,  
 Nor do our work by day?

Oft gratitude will thanks benumb,  
 Joy will our laughter quell:  
 May not Eternity be dumb  
 With things too good to tell?

## A DEPUTATION FROM JOHN THE BAPTIST

vii. 18-35

18 *And the disciples of John shewed him of all these things.*

19 *And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?*

20 *When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?*

21 *And in the same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight.*

22 *Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.*

23 *And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.*

24 *And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?*

25 *But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.*

26 *But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.*

27 *This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.*

28 *For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.*

29 *And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.*



30 *But the Pharisees and lawyers \*rejected the counsel of God †against themselves, being not baptized of him.*

31 *And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like?*

32 *They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.*

33 *For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil.*

34 *The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!*

35 *But wisdom is justified of all her children.*

SEE exposition of Mt. xi. 1-19. St. Matthew expressly mentions that John was now in prison (cf. xi. 2), but St. Luke assumes his readers' remembrance of his previous statement of the fact (cf. iii. 19, 20). For "Jesus" (ver. 19) the better attested reading is "the Lord," a frequent designation with St. Luke (cf. vii. 13, x. 1, 41 R.V., xi. 39, xii. 42, xvii. 5, 6, xviii. 6, xix. 8, xxii. 61). Observe that "shewed" (ver. 18) and "tell" (ver. 22) represent the same verb in the original. It signifies properly "report," being the word which St. John employs when he says in his first epistle (i. 2, 3: "We have seen, and bear witness, and report unto you . . . that which we have seen and heard report we unto you." See the force of it here. When John's disciples "reported" to him, a prisoner at far southern Machærûs, the doings of our Lord in Galilee, it was mere hearsay; now after hearing Him and witnessing His gracious works it was another sort of "report" that they would carry to their master—no longer hearsay but personal testimony. Observe further that in His censure of that unreasonable generation (ver. 32; cf. Mt. xi. 11) our Lord after His wont makes use of proverbial phraseology. And

\* Or, *frustrated.*

† Or, *within themselves.*



here again our best commentator is Æsop who in his fable of *The Piping Fisherman* tells of a fluteplayer who, thinking like Orpheus to charm the very fishes of the sea, seated himself on a jutting rock and discoursed to them his sweetest strains. But all in vain. So he let down a net and caught many. As they flapped on the beach, "Wretched animals!" said he, "when I piped you did not dance, and now that I have given over, you are doing it."

## THE SINFUL WOMAN IN THE HOUSE OF SIMON THE PHARISEE

vii. 36-50

36 *And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.*

37 *And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,*

38 *And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.*

39 *Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.*

40 *And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.*

41 *There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred \*pence, and the other fifty.*

42 *And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?*

43 *Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.*

44 *And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.*

\* See Mt. xviii. 28.

(258)

45 *Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.*

46 *My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.*

47 *Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.*

48 *And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.*

49 *And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?*

50 *And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.*

ST. LUKE alone tells this precious story; and it is largely congenial alike to his spirit and to the purpose of his Gospel, which is pre-eminently the Gospel of Grace. For (1) this is another of his many instances of our Lord's kindness to despised womankind. (2) The woman was a sinner, and the story displays Him as the Friend of sinners, who came to seek and save the lost. And (3) it displays yet another and no less striking characteristic of our Lord which the other Evangelists quite neglect and which, notwithstanding St. Luke's testimony, is still generally overlooked. St. Matthew and St. Mark represent the Pharisees as His implacable enemies, united in unholy alliance with their natural antagonists the Sadducees to compass His destruction; and while this is true, it is not the whole truth. For with all its grievous faults the Pharisaic order comprehended much that was good, all that was patriotic and most that was religious in the Jewish life of that period; and not a few of the Pharisees, even though, like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathæa, they lacked courage to confess Him, were well disposed to our Lord. And St. Luke is careful to exhibit this aspect of the situation. For example, he tells repeatedly of Pharisees who invited Him to their houses and entertained Him at their tables (cf. xi. 37, 38; xiv. 1), and

how He would eat and drink with them even as with the Publicans (cf. xv. 1, 2). For He was the Friend of both; and while He reproved the traditionalism, the hypocrisy, and the arrogance of the Pharisees, He recognised that they too were lost children of God and would fain win their faith.

Such a Pharisee was this Simon who "desired Him that He would eat with him" and invited a company to meet Him (cf. ver. 49). And what was his attitude toward our Lord? He had been impressed by His teaching and His miracles and recognised Him as certainly a prophet of God, perhaps indeed as something more, since in ver. 39 for "a prophet" several not unimportant authorities have "the prophet" (cf. Jo. i. 21), that is, the prophet who according to Jewish expectation (cf. exposition of Mt. iii. 1-12) would arise on the eve of the Messiah's advent and prepare the nation to receive Him. His invitation was kindly meant, and it evinces not a little courage that he should thus have defied the prevailing sentiment of his order; yet at the same time he deferred thereto and manifested his Pharisaic arrogance by the superciliousness of his behaviour toward our Lord. It was the custom at a Jewish feast that a slave should receive the guests and, taking off their sandals, lave their dusty feet, that the host should bid them welcome with a kiss, and that in the course of the banquet refreshing ointment should be poured on their heads (cf. Ps. xxiii. 5); and all these gracious courtesies were withheld from our Lord. It was honour enough for a man of the people that he was admitted to such a company.

It was an oldworld fashion, which continued until quite recent times, that strangers should be admitted to a banquet-hall "to see the grandees eat and drink." Hence it is no surprise that in the course of this memorable feast a woman should have appeared on the scene; but it was more than a surprise, it was an offence that such a woman should have appeared in such a house and in such a company. For she

was "a sinner," that is, a harlot; and in the view of a Pharisee her very presence was a pollution. Observe how the Evangelist introduces her. "Behold," he says, "a woman in the city which was a sinner." So our Version reads, suggesting that she belonged to that city whatever it may have been, whether Capernaum or, as may reasonably be inferred from the sequel, the neighbouring town of Magdala, notorious in the land, like Corinth in Greece, for its licentiousness. But the best manuscripts have "Behold, a woman which was in the city—a sinner," suggesting that she was a stranger in the town—a fallen woman who had wandered thither in her shame and was plying there her miserable business. It was plain what manner of woman she was; for her hair hung loose about her shoulders, and among the Jews unbound hair was the badge of a harlot.

What was her errand to the Pharisee's house? She had heard the fame of the Friend of Sinners; perhaps, standing on the outskirts of the crowd, she had listened to Him on the shore of the Lake or on the hillside, and His message had stirred penitence and hope in her heart. She would fain meet Him and receive absolution from His blessed lips, and on learning that He was supping that evening at the house of Simon she repaired thither. In the fashion of anointing the head of an honoured guest she saw an opportunity of engaging His attention; and she had furnished herself with an alabaster vase of perfume. Lucian mentions "an alabaster vase of perfume," worth a couple of *drachmæ* or about 2s., as a common hire for a harlot; and thus the woman's gift was the price of her shame. It was all she had. The company did not sit at table but reclined slantwise on couches, leaning on their left elbows that their right hands might be free to take their food. It was thus difficult for her to reach the Lord's head, but His feet were accessible. "So," says Bunyan in his racy rendering of the story in *The Jerusalem Sinner Saved*, "she gets behind Him, and weeps, and drops



her tears upon His feet like rain, and washes them, and wipes them with the hair of her head. She also kissed His feet with her lips, and anointed them with ointment." In that phrase "drops her tears upon His feet like rain" Bunyan catches the very idea of the original; for here (cf. ver. 44) "wash" is properly "wet" or "moisten," used especially of the rain. So Wycliffe: 'bigan to moyst his feet with teeris.' And "kissed" is here "kissed much," "kissed fondly," "covered with kisses," as the father kissed the prodigal (xv. 20), as the weeping Elders of Ephesus kissed the Apostle farewell (Ac. xx. 37), and as the traitor kissed the Master (Mt. xxvi. 49; Mk. xiv. 45).

It was an outrage upon Simon's Pharisaic propriety to see her thus "touching" or rather "clinging to" (cf. Jo. xx. 17) his guest. "Surely, quoth he, this man, if he were a prophet, would not let this woman come near him, for she is a town-sinner; so ignorant are all self-righteous men of the way of Christ with sinners." He said it to himself; but his face betrayed his thought, and our Lord told him that story of the creditor who had two debtors, one owing him 500 *denarii*, some £25, and the other 50, some £2 10s., and who "frankly," "freely," or more properly "graciously, as an act of grace, forgave them both"—a Pauline phrase (cf. Rom. viii. 32; 1 Cor. ii. 12; Eph. iv. 32; Col. ii. 13). "Which of them," He asked, "will love him more?" It seemed to Simon sheer trifling. "I suppose," he answered frigidly, "the one whom he showed the more grace." "A right judgment!" said our Lord; and then with a glance at the woman crouching at His feet He applied the parable in language rhythmic with emotion: "Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house: water upon My feet thou gavest not, but she rained tears upon My feet and with her tresses wiped them off; a kiss thou gavest Me not, but she ever since she (so numerous authorities) entered hath not ceased covering My feet with kisses; with oil My head thou didst not anoint,



but she with perfume anointed My feet. Wherefore, I tell thee, forgiven are her sins, her many sins, forasmuch as one who is little forgiven, little loveth."

He did not mean that her love had earned forgiveness; for had He not a moment ago proclaimed that forgiveness is not of merit but of grace, even as a moment hence He proclaims that her faith had saved her? He meant that her love was an evidence that God had marked her penitential tears and had not despised her offering of a broken and contrite heart; and therefore He granted her the absolution which she craved. The high claim involved in His exercise of the divine prerogative of forgiving sins did not escape the company; but they durst not raise the cry of blasphemy, remembering how He had already dealt with that accusation (cf. exposition of Mt. ix. 1-8). They merely whispered to each other; and heedless of their murmuring He dismissed the penitent: "Thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace."

Who was this sinful woman? With kindly charity the Evangelist in telling of her shame has concealed her name; but on irresistible evidence which he presently unfolds and, as we shall see, St. John most strikingly corroborates, she was identified by the great teachers of the Latin Church first with Mary Magdalene and then further with Mary the sister of Lazarus who re-enacted the scene in the house of Simon the Pharisee when she anointed her Saviour's feet at the supper which they made Him at Bethany (cf. exposition of Jo. xii. 1-11). It was natural that they should welcome the evidence and rejoice to see a sinner who had fallen so low thus lifted high, since they had ever a peculiar interest in the doctrines of grace, unlike the Greek theologians who concerned themselves rather with the metaphysics of the Faith. And their belief has commended itself to the saints all down the ages. It constantly and unquestioningly appears in the devotional literature of the Middle Ages, especially the Latin hymns, and in the writings not only of our own saints of former generations like "holy George Herbert" in his *Marie*

*Magdalene* and John Bunyan but of their successors in later days. We confess it when we sing:

Forgiven greatly, how I greatly love.  
Yet let my full heart what it can bestow:  
Like Mary's gift, let my devotion prove,  
Forgiven greatly, how I greatly love.

## MINISTERING WOMEN

viii. 1-3

1 *And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him,*

2 *And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils.*

3 *And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.*

WHEN our Lord sent His Apostles forth on their missions, He bade them go unprovided, with no money in their purses, relying for their maintenance on the grateful hospitality of their hearers (cf. Mt. x. 9, 10). And He enforced His command by His example. He was homeless and destitute of worldly wealth; and here St. Luke, ever observant of womanly devotion, tells us that women were His chief benefactors. Here we find Him on one of His frequent missions, travelling from town to town and from village to village, attended not only by the Twelve but by a company of women who had experienced His healing or His saving grace and were fain to testify their gratitude by "ministering unto Him of their substance." For "unto Him" the best authorities have "unto them"; and is there not a lesson in the variant? They indeed ministered unto His disciples, but they did it for His dear sake, "because they were His" (cf. Mk. ix. 41). It is good for a man to be in Christ's company.

Who were these women? The Evangelist names three of them (1) "Mary called Magdalene" or rather "Mary the Magdalene as she was called." And this is her constant designation in all the Gospels—not "Mary Magdalene" but "Mary the Magdalene." Magdala, never otherwise mentioned in the New Testament, was a town on the western side of the Lake of Galilee between Capernaum and Tiberias, the new capital of the Tetrarch Herod Antipas; and perhaps from its vicinity to the latter it was not only wealthy but, in accordance with the ancient proverb that "wealth makes wit waver," notoriously immoral. It was in Palestine what Corinth was in Greece; and "a Magdalene"—the foul epithet wherewith the mother of our Lord is branded in the Talmud by Jewish scurrility—signified a harlot. Mary the Magdalene was thus a woman whom the Lord had rescued from a life of shame; and this is the Evangelist's meaning when he says that "out of her had gone seven devils." For immorality was, according to the ancient idea (cf. exposition of Mt. viii. 28–34), a form of demoniacal possession; and possession by "seven devils" signified utter abandonment (cf. Mt. xii. 44, 45; Lk. xi. 24–26). It is a natural inference from her immediate introduction here that Mary the Magdalene was that sinful woman whose absolution in the house of Simon the Pharisee St. Luke has just related. (2) "Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward." It is an attractive suggestion of that grand old English scholar, Dr. John Lightfoot, that Chuza or, as the name is properly written, Chuzas may have been that "nobleman" of Capernaum who at the beginning of our Lord's Galilean ministry obtained from Him at Cana the healing of his child and "himself believed and his whole house" (Jo. iv. 46–54). It accords herewith that the word rendered "nobleman" was in later Greek the official designation of an administrator of state revenues, corresponding to St. Luke's description of Chuzas as "the steward" of the Tetrarch Herod Antipas.

It was thus not her own healing but her child's that had inspired Joanna with grateful devotion. (3) This record of her gracious ministration is Susanna's sole memorial; but since her mere name sufficed, she was evidently a well known personage in the Evangelist's day.

## THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

viii. 4-21

4 *And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable:*

5 *A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.*

6 *And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.*

7 *And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.*

8 *And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

9 *And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be?*

10 *And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.*

11 *Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.*

12 *Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.*

13 *They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.*

14 *And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.*

15 *But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.*



16 *No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.*

17 *For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.*

18 *Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he \*seemeth to have.*

19 *Then came to him his mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the press.*

20 *And it was told him by certain which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee.*

21 *And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.*

**S**EE exposition of Mt. xiii. 1-23. (1) According to St. Matthew (xiii. 4) and St. Mark (iv. 4) the mischance which befell the seed scattered by th wayside was simply that the birds devoured it, but St. Luke makes it twofold: "trodden under foot" and devoured by the birds. (2) St. Luke (ver. 8) has simply "a hundred fold," omitting the significant differentiation "some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty" (cf. Mt. xiii. 23; Mk. iv. 20), which recognises degrees of excellence even in the good soil. (3) Whereas St. Matthew (xiii. 22) and St. Mark (iv. 19) say that worldly-minded hearers like the weedy ground "become unfruitful," St. Luke, bringing out our Lord's charitable intention, says that "they bring no fruit to perfection" (ver. 14). They may bear fruit, but it is poor and stunted. (4) St. Matthew (xiii. 23) and St. Mark (iv. 20) describe the hearers who are like the good soil as "hearing the Word and understanding it," "hearing it and receiving it"; but since both the shallow ground and the weedy ground hearers also receive it, St. Luke (ver. 15) adds here the differentiation that they "hear it in an honest and good heart," an idiomatic phrase betraying his Greek culture. In the orig-

\* Or, *thinketh that he hath.*

inal "honest" and "good" are practically synonymous terms. Thus, when we read in ver. 8 of "the good ground," it is the latter that is used, whereas in ver. 15 it is the former—"the honest ground." Their distinction appears when it is understood that "honest" is literally "beautiful," denoting not merely the inward quality of goodness but its outward charm as it meets the eye; and hence "honest and good"—generally written in Greek as a single word "honest-good"—was the description of a complete gentleman. "Hold honest-goodness more trustworthy than an oath" was a maxim of the Greek sage Solon, meaning that "a gentleman's word is better than his bond." And so St. Luke, himself a true gentleman, here describes a fruitful hearer as one who deals with the Word as a gentleman deals with his fellows—fairly, honourably, and loyally. Unlike the wayside hearer he "keeps it" or rather "holds it fast," taking it into his heart; and thus, giving it a fair chance unlike the shallow ground and the weedy ground hearers, he "bringeth forth fruit with patience" or rather "with endurance," not merely "during for a while" (Mt. xiii. 21). There is no other way of bringing forth fruit; for the harvest matures gradually (cf. Ja. v. 7).

The lesson of the parable was twofold, admonishing the Twelve of their duty to proclaim the Word as the sower scatters the seed, and the multitude of their responsibility in hearing it. And by way of enforcing both our Evangelist, like St. Mark (iv. 21-25), adds here those Jewish aphorisms regarding teachers and disciples which St. Matthew has preserved in various connections (cf. v. 15, x. 26, vii. 2). And with the same practical end in view he introduces here our Lord's unhappy rencontre with "His mother and brethren" which St. Matthew (xii. 46-50, where see exposition) and St. Mark (iii. 31-35) place in its actual position after His stern refutation of the Pharisees' ascription of His miracles to "black art." The latter incident is unrecorded by St. Luke, and he introduces here the story of "His mother and

brethren" as illustrating the blessedness of a faithful hearer of the Word. Observe how he adapts it to this use. According to St. Matthew and St. Mark our Lord said: "Who-soever shall do the will of My Father in Heaven, the same is My brother and sister and mother." But what is "the will of the Heavenly Father"? It is no remote mystery, forasmuch as it has been revealed in His Word, the message of the Gospel. And therefore St. Luke, making the truth plain, has written here: "My mother and My brethren are these"—these My disciples—"which hear the Word of God, and do it."

## RETREAT ACROSS THE LAKE

viii. 22-39

22 *Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth.*

23 *But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy.*

24 *And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.*

25 *And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.*

26 *And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.*

27 *And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.*

28 *When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.*

29 *(For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.)*

30 *And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.*

31 *And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep.*

32 *And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them.*

33 *Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.*

34 *When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country.*

35 *Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.*

36 *They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.*

37 *Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again.*

38 *Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying,*

39 *Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him.*

**S**EE exposition of Mt. viii. 23-34; Mk. iv. 35-v. 20. (1) In ver. 23 for "were filled" read "were being filled," "were fast filling." (2) Where St. Matthew and St. Mark have "come to the other side," St. Luke has (ver. 26) not "arrived at" but "sailed down to"—a phrase which occurs here only in the New Testament. It was a nautical term. Since the sea seems to rise up from the land, a ship making the port was said to "sail down from the high seas"; and conversely in putting out to sea she was said to "sail up." The familiar illusion was foreign to a landlocked lake; and St. Luke's use of the seaman's phrase here reveals him as, unlike the Jewish Evangelists, a man of the



world accustomed to travel. Only an experienced and observant voyager could have written his story of the disastrous voyage to Rome (Ac. xxvii), betraying as it does a close and accurate understanding of the navigation of his day. (3) His description of the demoniac betrays the expert physician. "Oftentimes," he says (ver. 29), "it had caught him" or rather "many times it had seized him," meaning in the medical phraseology of the period that the man's madness was intermittent—fits of violence with lucid intervals. Then, when he says according to the true reading (ver. 27) that he "had devils, and long time" or rather "for a considerable time had worn no clothes," he intimates that the present seizure was one of unusual severity and duration. St. Luke alone expressly mentions his nakedness, though St. Mark implies it (cf. v. 15); and medical writers of the period reckoned it among the "signs" of madness when the maniac tore his clothes to shreds and went naked. (4) Whereas St. Mark (v. 10) says that the devils besought our Lord not to "send them out of the country," the inhabited and cultivated country, into the desert, St. Luke (ver. 31) makes them beseech Him not to send them "into the deep," literally "the abyss," whether Hell (cf. Rev. xx. 1, 3) or the sea (cf. Rom. x. 7). In either case the Evangelists mean alike, since the later Jews recognized two entrances to Hell—the desert (cf. Num. xvi. 33) and the sea (cf. Jon. ii. 2; Rev. xiii. 1).



## JAIRUS' DAUGHTER AND A WOMAN WITH HEMORRHAGE

viii. 40-56

40 *And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received him: for they were all waiting for him.*

41 *And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house:*

42 *For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him.*

43 *And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any,*

44 *Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanchèd.*

45 *And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?*

46 *And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.*

47 *And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.*

48 *And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.*

49 *While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master.*

50 *But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.*

51 *And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to*

*go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.*

52 *And all wept and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth.*

53 *And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.*

54 *And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise.*

55 *And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat.*

56 *And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.*

SEE exposition of Mt. ix. 18-26; Mk. v. 21-43. Observe how the physician is revealed in this narrative. (1) Contrast the gentleness of St. Luke, himself a physician, in speaking of the ill success of her physicians in their treatment of the woman (ver. 43) with St. Mark's sarcasm (v. 26): "she had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse." Ancient physicians were little esteemed. It is written in the Talmud that "the best of physicians is ripe for Gehenna," forasmuch as, like Chaucer's Doctour of Phisyk, "his studie was but litel on the bible"; whence the saying: "Three physicians, two atheists." There was a Latin proverb: "A physician is worse than a robber, since the latter takes your money or your life, and the physician takes both"; and another that "only physicians may kill with impunity." (2) Where St. Mark has (ver. 29) "the fountain of her blood was dried up," St. Luke has (ver. 44) "her issue of blood stanchèd" or rather "the *flux* of her blood was *stopped*," employing two technical phrases of Greek medical writers regarding discharges from the body. (3) It is at the first glance surprising to find that idea of "virtue" or "power" emanating from our Lord, which St. Mark introduces (v. 30) as an explanatory comment, put here (ver. 46) on His own lips,

as though St. Luke despite his professional knowledge shared the popular notion which the woman entertained (cf. Mk. v. 28) that there was a magical efficacy in mere contact with Him or His belongings apart from His will. It is not really, however, that crude notion which is here expressed but that mysterious principle which our Lord constantly experienced in His miraculous ministry (cf. exposition of Mt. viii. 16, 17), that so closely and intimately linked are body and soul that spiritual sympathy exhausts nervous energy. (4) Once more, "her spirit came again" (ver. 55) or rather "her breath returned" is probably another example of St. Luke's medical phraseology. "Spirit" signifies properly "breath"; and had the Evangelist meant that its immortal tenant reanimated the lifeless body, he would naturally have written that "her soul (a different word from "spirit" in Greek) returned." His meaning is rather that "her respiration returned," "she resumed breathing." It is the same language that the Psalmist uses in the Greek Version when he says (Ps. cxlvi. 4): "His *breath* goeth forth, he *returneth* to his earth." And so it is written of our Lord: "He yielded up His spirit," literally "His breath" (Mt. xxvii. 50); "He gave up the ghost" (Mk. xv. 37; Lk. xxiii. 46), literally "breathed out," "expired"; and again "He gave up the ghost," literally "His breath" (Jo. xix. 30).

## PREMONITIONS OF THE END (ix. 1-36)

### I. COMMISSION OF THE TWELVE

#### ix. 1-6

1 *Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.*

2 *And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.*

3 *And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.*

4 *And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart.*

5 *And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.*

6 *And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where.*

SEE exposition of Mt. x. 1, 5-14 and Mk. vi. 7-13. It is remarkable that in one important manuscript ver. 1 is written thrice over. This cannot be a merely accidental repetition such as frequently occurred in transcription; and it may have been intended to direct attention to the significance of the incident, marking as it does a momentous development of our Lord's ministry. His experience at once of the irresponsiveness of the multitude to His spiritual appeal and of the growing hostility of the rulers admonished Him that the inevitable end was approaching; and the Evangelist now shows by a series of striking inci-

dents (vers. 1-36) how He addressed Himself to the task of initiating His Apostles into the ministry which would devolve upon them after His departure. His first step was sending them forth "two by two," as St. Mark tells us, on evangelical missions.

## 2. FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

## ix. 7-17

7 Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him: and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead;

8 And of some, that Elias had appeared; and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again.

9 And Herod said, John have I beheaded: but who is this, of whom I hear such things? And he desired to see him.

10 And the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done. And he took them, and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida.

11 And the people, when they knew it, followed him: and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.

12 And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place.

13 But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people.

14 For they were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company.

15 And they did so, and made them all sit down.

16 Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude.

17 And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets.



SEE exposition of Mt. xiv. 1, 2, 13-21 and Mk. vi. 14-16, 30-44. One step leads to another. The activities of the Twelve, especially their miracles of healing in His name, extended the Master's fame until it reached the ears of the guilty Tetrarch and excited his conscience to superstitious alarm. "He desired" or rather "sought," "was seeking to see Him"; and so our Lord retreated with the Twelve across the Lake to the quiet eastern shore, not merely that He might shun the embarrassment of an interview with Herod but that He might be at leisure to apprise them of His approaching Passion, foreshadowed by the Baptist's death, and reveal to them its redemptive necessity. The pursuit of the multitude, while frustrating His immediate intention, afforded Him an unexpected opportunity of proclaiming by the miracle the sacramental significance of His death,

## 3. EXPRESS ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE PASSION

## ix. 18-27

18 *And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am?*

19 *They answering said, John the Baptist; but some say Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again.*

20 *He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God.*

21 *And he straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing;*

22 *Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.*

23 *And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*

24 *For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.*

25 *For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?*

26 *For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.*

27 *But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.*

**S**EE exposition of Mt. xvi. 13-28 and Mk. viii. 27-ix. 1. Concerned only to exhibit the Lord's ever fuller discovery to the Twelve of the mystery of His Passion, St. Luke omits the intervening events (cf. Mt. xiv. 22-xvi. 12; Mk. vi. 45-viii. 26) and hastens to tell the story of this so

clear and emphatic a declaration. The scene was Cæsarea Philippi, where after long seeking He had found a quiet retreat; but St. Luke makes no mention of the locality and barely mentions Peter's great confession, so fully and impressively recorded by St. Matthew, and mentions it merely by way of introducing the ensuing announcement of the Passion. Observe that here again (ver. 18) he alone of the Evangelists tells how ere making the announcement our Lord engaged in solitary prayer according to His wont at every solemn crisis of His ministry (cf. exposition of vi. 12), proving how the thought of His Passion weighed upon His heart. In ver. 25 read: "What is a man profited by gaining the whole world and losing or forfeiting His own self?" (cf. exposition of Mt. xvi. 26).

## 4. THE GLORY THAT SHOULD FOLLOW

ix. 28-36

28 *And it came to pass about an eight days after these \*sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.*

29 *And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering.*

30 *And behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias:*

31 *Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.*

32 *But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.*

33 *And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said.*

34 *While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.*

35 *And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.*

36 *And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.*

**S**EE exposition of Mt. xvii. 1-13 and Mk. ix. 2-13. Our Lord had revealed only half the truth to the Twelve when He forewarned them of His cruel death; and now He proceeds to disclose to His three intimates, who were fit-

\* Or, *things*.

test to receive it and in due time communicate it to their comrades, the triumph which that tragedy should win. (1) Here again St. Luke and he alone mentions that when the manifestation of His Resurrection-glory was vouchsafed, our Lord was employed in prayer. (2) Whereas St. Matthew and St. Mark say "He was transfigured before them," St. Luke has "the fashion of His countenance was altered." The reason is that "transfigured" or rather "transformed" is the original "metamorphosed"; and the word would have sounded ill in the ears of the Greek Evangelist's readers, suggesting to their minds the classical fables of the "metamorphosis" of pagan gods and goddesses. (3) St. Matthew and St. Mark say merely that Moses and Elijah were "talking with Him," but St. Luke tells whereof they talked—"His decease which He should" or rather "was about to," "would soon accomplish at Jerusalem." The word in the sense of "death" occurs in the New Testament only here and in the second Epistle of St. Peter (i. 15), where the Apostle on the eve of his martyrdom speaks of his "decease"; and it is significant that like his Lord he was crucified (cf. Jo. xxi. 18, 19). The Greek word is "exodus"; and it defines our Lord's death as a glorious triumph like the deliverance of Israel of old from the land of bondage. The text of our Gospel which St. Chrysostom used read not "the decease" but "the glory which He was about to accomplish"; and so it is written in the Epistle to the Hebrews (ii. 9) that "for the suffering of death" He was "crowned with glory and honour." His cross was a throne, His death a triumph.

## AFTER THE TRANSFIGURATION

ix. 37-50

37 *And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him.*

38 *And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child.*

39 *And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again and bruising him hardly departeth from him.*

40 *And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not.*

41 *And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither.*

42 *And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.*

43 *And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples.*

44 *Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men.*

45 *But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying.*

46 *Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest.*

47 *And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him,*

48 *And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me*



*receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.*

49 *And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us.*

50 *And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.*

**S**EE exposition of Mt. xvii. 14-23, xviii. 1-5 and Mk. ix. 14-41. Observe how St. Luke after his wont displays his professional knowledge in telling the story of the healing of the possessed child. St. Matthew expressly states that it was a case of epilepsy (cf. xvii. 15 R.V.), and St. Luke, though he does not name it, describes in the medical phraseology of his day the symptoms of that distressful malady, called "the sacred disease" inasmuch as the struggling and shrieking which accompanied a seizure were popularly regarded as visible tokens of spiritual working. (1) "*Look upon my son*" (ver. 38). In the Greek medical writers this verb is constantly used of a physician's inspection of a patient—the examination of his condition and observation of his symptoms. So the father here means "Examine my son's case." (2) "He suddenly crieth out" (ver. 39). This word also was a medical term, constantly used of sharp cries of pain or frenzy, sudden strokes or seizures or paroxysms. (3) "It teareth him that he *foameth* again," literally "teareth him with foaming." Hippocrates mentions as a symptom of epilepsy "if he emits foam from his mouth and kicks with his feet" and again "foam flows from the mouth and the teeth are clenched." (4) "Hardly *departeth*"—the medical term for a malady yielding to treatment, like an adversary reluctantly yielding ground.



SETTING HIS FACE TOWARD  
JERUSALEM

ix. 51-xix. 27



**O**BERVE the plan of our Evangelist's narrative. He has sketched our Lord's Galilean ministry (iv. 14-ix. 50), illustrating by various incidents on the one hand His increasing popularity and on the other the deepening hostility of the Jewish authorities, and latterly His disposition to withdraw alike from the enthusiasm of the multitude and from the annoyance of His enemies and devote Himself to the all-important task of instructing the Twelve in the mysteries of His Kingdom and, in view of the inevitable end, preparing them to take up His work and continue it after His departure. And now that the course of events has demonstrated the imminence of the fateful consummation He is ready to meet it and "steadfastly sets His face to go to Jerusalem." He bids farewell to Capernaum (cf. Mt. xix. 1; Mk. x. 1), the headquarters of His Galilean ministry; and St. Luke first of all outlines His journey to the sacred capital, the scene of His Passion (ix. 51-x). But He did not proceed thither immediately on quitting Capernaum. He lingered a while in Galilee, visiting its towns and villages and making a final appeal to their people; and the Evangelist illustrates this interlude by various incidents belonging mainly to it, though he includes among them several which, as St. Matthew and St. Mark show, belonged to the earlier Galilean ministry and which had found no place in his brief sketch thereof (xi-xiii. 21). And then he tells how the Lord bade Galilee farewell and recounts a succession of incidents in the course of His progress southward (xiii. 22-xix. 27).

## JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM (ix. 51-x)

### 1. UNFRIENDLY SAMARITANS

ix. 51-56

51 *And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,*

52 *And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him.*

53 *And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.*

54 *And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?*

55 *But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.*

56 *For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.*

THE messengers whom He sent before His face were the Seventy whose commission is presently related (cf. x. 1-16); and the Evangelist introduces this incident here anticipatively in order to show our Lord's reason for despatching them in advance to visit the towns and villages along His route. It was the last time He would ever travel that way, and He was anxious that His last appeal should prevail. Therefore He sent the Seventy to herald His approach and awaken an interest in His message. Samaria lay between Galilee and Judæa and its people were a half heathen race. After the Assyrian conquest of the northern



kingdom of Israel about the year 750 B.C. the devastated country was peopled by Assyrian settlers (cf. 2 Ki. xvii) who intermarried with the Israelitish survivors; and the Samaritans were their descendants. After the Return in 536 B.C. they claimed kinship with the repatriated exiles and would have co-operated with them in rebuilding the Temple, but their offer was scornfully rejected. "Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel" (Ezr. iv. 3). "Ourselves alone" is the rendering of the Latin Vulgate, and so the Irish version, executed under the direction of Bishop William Bedell (1570-1642) has *sinn fein*—a phrase of unhappy memory in our British history. It was a tragic blunder, the loss of a golden opportunity of reconciliation; and it brought a long train of sorrow. The Samaritans built a rival temple on Mount Gerizim and worshipped there. They accepted the Law of Moses, practised its ceremonial, and kept the sacred feasts, tracing their descent from Joseph and claiming Jacob as their father (cf. Jo. iv. 12); yet they were regarded by their Jewish neighbours as heretics, more unclean than Gentiles. And they were swift to retaliate, insulting and maltreating Jewish travellers betwixt Galilee and Judæa as they passed through their territory.

It was, as St. John shows (cf. vii. 2), at the season of the Feast of Tabernacles when our Lord and the Twelve took their journey to the Holy City; and evidently the troops of pilgrims to the Feast had excited the animosity of the Samaritans. And thus, despite the gracious ministry of His heralds, when our Lord crossed the frontier and approached the first village on His route, He encountered a hostile reception. It seems that He and His followers were subjected to actual violence, insomuch that James and John, "the Sons of Thunder" as He had designated them in playful reproof of their fiery spirit (cf. Mk. iii. 17), proposed that He should emulate Elijah of old by calling

down fire from heaven to consume them (cf. 2 Ki. i. 10-12). And what was his reply? Most of our chief manuscripts omit "even as Elias did," and thereafter read simply "But He turned and rebuked them. And they went to another village." Were it merely a question of manuscript authority, then it would be necessary to regard the clauses thus omitted as later interpolations; but there are three considerations which preclude this conclusion. (1) The words here put on our Lord's lips bear the stamp of authenticity. They attest themselves as His. (2) Though omitted by our chief manuscripts, all these clauses are given not only by others of much importance but by several ancient versions and patristic writers earlier than our oldest manuscript. And (3) their omission is easily explained. Tertullian tells us that they were employed by Marcion and his school in proof of their heretical doctrine of two Gods, the Just God of the Jews and the Good God of the Christians. They ascribed to the former the Old Testament Scriptures and to the latter the New Testament, particularly the Pauline writings which magnify Grace as against Law; and it was natural that they should appeal to this passage which so emphatically censures the ancient spirit, displaying "the severity of the Judge and contrariwise the gentleness of Christ." And no less natural was it that their orthodox opponents should mutilate the passage in order to deprive them of their controversial advantage. And therefore it is reasonable to accept the passage as it stands in our text. It was surely so written by the Evangelist.

## 2. HALF-HEARTED BELIEVERS

ix. 57-62

57 *And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.*

58 *And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.*

59 *And he said unto another, Follow me, But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.*

60 *Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.*

61 *And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.*

62 *And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*

**I**T was not merely hostility that our Lord anticipated when He sent His heralds "two by two" (x. 1) before Him "to make ready for Him" in the hope of thus winning a welcome for His final appeal. There would also be many who, cherishing the Jewish ideal of the Messianic Kingdom, would suppose when they saw His face set toward Jerusalem that He was at last going thither to take the throne of His father David; many too with a truer conception of His claims who would shrink from the surrender which He demanded and by postponing decision miss their last opportunity. And these dispositions the Evangelist now exemplifies by three instances. Two of these St. Matthew has recorded in quite another connection (cf. Mt. viii. 19-22, where see exposition); and St. Luke now adds a third, in-

roducing the incidents here not because they actually befell in the course of His progress toward Jerusalem but because they illustrate the experiences which He then encountered. As we have seen, the first shows *the shattering of a false ideal* and the second *the brushing aside of an excuse*; while the third, which St. Luke alone has recorded, shows *the rejection of a half-hearted offer*.

This man's fault was divided affection (cf. Ja. i. 8). He really desired and meant to follow the Lord; but his heart clung to his old life, and ere making the sacrifice he would fain, like Elisha of old (cf. 1 Ki. xix. 19-21), go home and bid his friends farewell or, as the phrase of the original may also mean and does mean elsewhere (cf. xiv. 33 R.V.), "renounce the things in his house." Our Lord foresaw how such dallying would inevitably end. If the man went home, he would stay there. The remonstrances of his friends and the allurements of his possessions would conquer his infirm purpose, and he would be lost to the Kingdom of God. He was like a ploughman who instead of fixing his eye steadily ahead and drawing his furrow straight and clean keeps looking backward. Such a man is "not fit," literally "well set for the Kingdom of God" (cf. Pr. iv. 25-27).

## 3. THE COMMISSION OF THE SEVENTY

## X. 1-16

1 *After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.*

2 *Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.*

3 *Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.*

4 *Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.*

5 *And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house.*

6 *And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.*

7 *And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.*

8 *And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you:*

9 *And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.*

10 *But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say,*

11 *Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.*

12 *But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.*

13 *Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which*



*have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.*

*14 But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you.*

*15 And thou, Capernaum, which are exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell.*

*16 He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.*

NOW after indicating the reason for so novel a step St. Luke tells the story of our Lord's commission of the Seventy—a story which is untold by St. Matthew and St. Mark inasmuch as they have preserved no record of this stage of our Lord's ministry. Observe that the charge which He gave them is largely the same, though with significant variations, as His commission of the Twelve, which, briefly indicated by St. Luke (cf. ix. 1-6), is reported at length by St. Matthew (cf. ix. 37-x. 42); and the reason why He thus repeats His admonitions is that the Seventy no less than the Twelve were Apostles, though less in honour and authority inasmuch as they were later won to faith and enjoyed a lesser intimacy with the Master. Though he does not expressly style them "Apostles," the Evangelist does so by implication when he writes that "He appointed *other* seventy, and sent them" or rather "commissioned them," using in the original the verb whence "apostle" is derived. Every man was an Apostle who had an apostolic vocation and did an Apostle's work; and it is significant that in the New Testament we find others beside the Twelve designated "apostles" (cf. 1 Cor. xv. 5, 7; Ac. xiv. 4, 14). And wherefore did He appoint seventy? Just as He had chosen twelve in the first instance because their immediate mission was to Israel (cf. Mt. x. 5, 6) and there were twelve tribes of Israel, so now inasmuch as, according to the Jewish reckoning (based on Gen. x), mankind was composed of seventy nations, He appoints "other seventy also," proclaim-



ing the worldwide destination of His Gospel. And it accords herewith that their initial mission was through Samaria.

In His charge our Lord shows the Seventy how they must comport themselves in the prosecution of their mission, and what graces were especially needful. (1) *Consecration* (ver. 2). Wherefore should they pray that He would do the very thing which He was doing? Because prayer is the pathway to consecration. If we truly desire the coming of the Kingdom, we shall do our utmost to advance it. One who prays "Send forth labourers" will presently add "Here am I; send me" (Is. vi. 8). (2) *Courage* (ver. 3). They would encounter hostility and danger: it was no enterprise for cowards. (3) *Faith* (ver. 4a). They must go poor and unprovided, trusting God for food and shelter. They were His servants, and He will be no man's debtor. (4) *Zeal* (ver. 4b). Oriental salutation was an elaborate ceremony, and "salute no man by the way" was a proverbial phrase inculcating haste and prohibiting unnecessary delay (cf. 2 Ki. iv. 29). In the *Arabian Nights* tale of Nouredin it is told how the chamberlain came to Nouredin's door to warn him of the Sultan's displeasure, and when the latter would have saluted him, he cried: "O my master, this is not a time for salutation nor for talking. Save thyself by flight." (5) *Courtesy* (vers. 5-8). Though eschewing idle formality, they must in no wise fail in courtesy. On entering a house they should pronounce the customary benediction "Peace be to this house," the mediæval *Pax vobiscum*. If the inmate were "a son of peace," that is, one deserving of peace (cf. 1 Sam. xxvi. 16, 2 Sam. xii. 5 with marginal rendering), then the blessing would rest upon him; and in any case they would themselves profit by it, since kindness blesses him who gives as well as him who takes. Where they were entertained, they should not be servile as though they were mendicants, since their ministration entitled them to requital; yet neither

should they be ungrateful or inconsiderate. "Go not," says our Lord, "from house to house." Most probably this means, as Beza understood it, that they should not leave a poor house which had welcomed them for another where they would fare better. But it may be also, like that wise word in the Book of Ecclesiasticus (xxix. 23): "It is a miserable life to go from house to house," an admonition, most salutary for Christian ministers in all ages, to shun the unprofitable entanglements of social intercourse. "It is a shame," says St. Jerome in his eighteenth epistle, deploring distractions in study, "to speak of the routine of salutation, whereby either we ourselves daily visit others or await their coming to us. We fall a-talking; discourse is wasted; the absent are torn to pieces; other people's life is canvassed; and biting one another we are consumed one of another (cf. Gal. v. 15)." And so pleaded Richard Baxter, discoursing to ministers at Worcester in the year 1655: "O brethren, watch, therefore, over your own hearts! Keep out sinful passions and worldly inclinations; keep up the life of faith and love; be much at home; and be much with God."

The Apostles, our Lord concludes, were His representatives, invested with His authority; and thus a heavy responsibility lay upon their hearers. Whatever was done to them was done to Him; and whatever was done to Him was done to God. With vers. 12-15 cf. Mt. xi. 20-24, where see exposition.

## 4. THE RETURN OF THE SEVENTY

## x. 17-24

17 *And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.*

18 *And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.*

19 *Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.*

20 *Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.*

21 *In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.*

22 *\*All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.*

23 *And he turned him unto his disciples and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see:*

24 *For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.*

**H**ERE the narrative leaps forward. The Seventy have fulfilled their mission, and they rejoin the Master, perhaps on His way to Jerusalem, perhaps in the city, their

\* Many ancient copies add these words, *And turning to his disciples, he said.*

appointed rendezvous, and joyfully tell Him their story—how “even the devils were subject to them in His name,” that is, how according to their commission (cf. ver. 9) they had healed the sick, even victims of desperate maladies like epilepsy and lunacy which on the ancient view so clearly evinced demoniacal possession. Their exultation vexed Him. For (1) it betrayed their faithlessness. Their surprise at their success proved how little they had expected it. He had expected it; nay, He had expected yet more: “I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven” (cf. Is. xiv. 12). Let them put their commission to the test, and they would achieve yet greater wonders. For was it not written (Ps. xci. 13): “Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the adder: the young lion and the serpent shall thou trample under feet”? (2) There was spiritual pride in their exultation; and so He reminds them that a stronger reason for rejoicing than the power of working miracles is the privilege of enrolment in the Book of Life (cf. Phil. iv. 3). “I have come,” wrote Dr. G. J. Romanes during his last illness, “to see that cleverness, success, attainment, count for little; that goodness, or *character*, is the important factor in life.” And this is granted only to “babes”—gentle, loving souls that keep close to the Saviour and learn of the Father through Him. The fault of the Apostles lay not in their rejoicing but in their pride; and truly, if only they kept their hearts pure and lowly, they had reason for rejoicing, since the blessedness which prophets and kings of old had desired was theirs. With vers. 21-24 cf. Mt. xi. 25-30, xiii. 16, 17, where see exposition.

## 5. WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR?

## x. 25-37

25 *And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*

26 *He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?*

27 *And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.*

28 *And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.*

29 *But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?*

30 *And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.*

31 *And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.*

32 *And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.*

33 *But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,*

34 *And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.*

35 *And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two \*pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee.*

\* See Mt. xx. 2.



36 *Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?*

37 *And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.*

**C**ONTINUING His journey, our Lord has passed through Samaria and is now preaching somewhere in Judæa, evidently, since His hearers were seated (cf. ver. 25), in a synagogue and probably in the city of Jericho since His next station was the village of Bethany. The theme of His discourse seems to have been "eternal life"; and at its close "a lawyer" or Rabbi, one of the learned order of the Pharisees whose business was the interpretation of the Sacred Law, arose and asked Him "What shall I do to inherit 'eternal life'?" He was no earnest inquirer but, like most of his order, an enemy of our Lord, and he meant to entangle Him in a theological controversy, thinking that with his technical equipment he would easily get the better of Him and thus publicly discredit Him. Our Lord perceived his design and handled him with His wonted skill. He asked him what was the teaching of those Scriptures which he professed to understand so well. The Lawyer had a ready answer; for it was a commonplace of the Rabbinical theology (cf. Mt. xxii. 34-40; Mk. xii. 28-34) that the whole Law was summarised by two requirements—"loving God with all one's heart" (cf. Dt. vi. 5) and "loving one's neighbour as oneself" (cf. Lev. xix. 18). Our Lord approved the definition, and then the Lawyer had his opportunity. For the Law defined one's neighbours as "the children of one's people" (Lev. xix. 18), and the Jews scorned all aliens as "Gentile dogs." He knew well that our Lord thought otherwise; and if he could betray Him into defining "neighbour" as not merely a fellow Jew but a fellow man, he would straightway charge Him with the heresy of contravening Scripture. "And who," said he, "is my 'neighbour'?" The answer was a parable which would go home to a Jericho audience. The city was only



fifteen miles from Jerusalem, but the road was very dangerous. It was steep and rugged, and moreover infested by brigands, whence it was known as "the Ascent of Blood." It was much frequented not only by merchants but by "holy men"; for the Temple services were administered by the twenty-four courses of the priesthood (cf. exposition of i. 5), and since half of the officiating course lodged at Jericho where food and water were plentiful, there were always priests passing to and fro. Our Lord tells how a traveller was assailed there by brigands who plundered him and left him lying half dead. Presently a priest came down the road, and on seeing the unfortunate he gave him a wide berth and went his way, disdaining the unpleasant task of handling the bleeding body and no doubt apprehensive of being assailed should he linger. Then came a Levite, one of the inferior order of the Temple ministers who slew and dressed the sacrifices. Surely he would not hesitate to soil his hands, but he too "passed by on the other side." By and by another appeared, no holy man nor even a Jew but a despised Samaritan; yet he succoured the wounded Jew.

He ran to the body, an' turnt it ower :

"There's life i' the man!" he cried.

*He* wasna ane to stan' an' glower,

Nor haud to the ither side.

He dressed the gaping wounds, according to the medical practice of the day, with oil and wine, the oil to soften and soothe and the wine to cleanse and close them, and then bandaged them. And he lifted the man on his own ass and conveyed him to the nearest caravanserai, and there tended him all night. On the morrow or rather "toward the morrow," when he must hasten on his interrupted journey, he bespoke the host's good offices, paying him handsomely. For his "two pence" were two *denarii*, and a *denarius* was then a day's wage (cf. Mt. xx. 2). Nor was that the limit of his generosity. "Take care of him," said

he; "and any additional expense I shall pay thee when I come back." Evidently he was a constant traveller on that route: the host knew him, and he had good credit.

"Now," said our Lord, applying the parable, "which of the three proved 'neighbour'?" There was only one answer: "The Samaritan," but the Lawyer could not bear to pronounce the odious word. "He that showed mercy" he faltered reluctantly. It was the very answer that our Lord would have given at the outset and which would have involved Him in a charge of heresy. "Go," said He, "and do thou likewise." Thus the cunning Lawyer had been caught in his own snare, and where he had thought to confound our Lord, he was himself confounded. Nor was this the sole purpose of the parable. For it conveyed a profitable lesson to all that Jewish congregation, and not least to the disciples, resentful as they were of their rude reception in the inhospitable village.

## 6. MARTHA AND MARY.

x. 38-42

38 *Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.*

39 *And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.*

40 *But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.*

41 *And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:*

42 *But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.*

**O**BERVE the significant reticence wherewith these two sisters are introduced: "a certain village—a certain woman named Martha—a sister called Mary." The village was Bethany on the hither side of the crest of Mount Olivet and they were the sisters of Lazarus (cf. Jo. xi. 1); but St. Luke mentions neither it nor him, a reticence which is inexplicable save on the understanding that Mary was the Magdalene, that sinful woman who had found mercy in the house of Simon the Pharisee (cf. vii. 36-50). Writing later when the brother and sisters had "past to where beyond these voices there is peace," St. John freely introduced them into his narrative; but the earlier Evangelists conceal them behind a kindly veil of silence. Apart from their unrevealing references to the Magdalene neither St. Matthew nor St. Mark ever mentions them; and when St. Luke, ever peculiarly interested in womenfolk, here introduces the sisters, it

is with studious reserve. Yet even so observe how the secret is betrayed to perceiving eyes in this story of the Lord's stay at Bethany in the course of His journey to Jerusalem that He might visit the home which His grace had blessed. For is it not a suggestive reminiscence when the Evangelist tells how Mary "sat at the Lord's (R.V.) feet"—those blessed feet which she had washed with her tears and wiped with her loose tresses, fondly kissing them and anointing them with perfume?

When our Lord reached Bethany it was as we have seen, the season of the Feast of Tabernacles (cf. Jo. vii. 1-10), the most joyous of all the Jewish festivals. "He who has not seen its joy," it was said, "knows not what joy is." It was, in the first instance, a commemoration of the Exodus from Egypt, and in remembrance of the tents wherein their fathers had dwelt during their wilderness wanderings, the people made them tabernacles or booths of thick branches intertwined with boughs of olive and myrtle. At the same time it was the feast of harvest, celebrating the ingathering of the fruits of field and vineyard and orchard; and so the citizens made their booths on the flat roofs or in the court-yards of their houses, while strangers made theirs in the streets or about the city walls, and beneath those pleasant bowers they kept a week's holiday, "rejoicing according to the joy in harvest." It was a time of feasting and hospitality and neighbourly kindness. They "ate the fat and drank the sweet, and sent portions unto him for whom nothing was prepared, and made great mirth" (cf. Neh. viii. 9-18).

At any time the Master would have been welcome in the home which He had so blessed; but at that season especially Martha, a famous housewife, was fain to entertain Him royally, and she set about preparing a goodly supper. Forgetful of all else, Mary seated herself at His dear feet and heard His word, while her sister was "cumbered about much serving" or rather "distracted about much service." The

word "service" befits the occasion, since in the original it refers properly to attendance at table. And "distracted" is a phrase which occurs in the New Testament in only one other passage (1 Cor. vii. 31), where St. Paul, "pending the present distress," counsels his readers to shun the snare of marriage, that they may "attend upon the Lord *without distraction*." Perhaps St. Luke may have used the word here to point his master's admonition by so apt an example of domestic disquietude. Her sister's detachment aggravated the busy housewife, and at length she could endure it no longer. "She came to Him" or rather "came up to Him," literally "stood over Him"—a phrase denoting a sudden interruption, always startling and generally hostile (cf. ii. 9, xx. 1, xxi. 34; Ac. iv. 1, vi. 12). "Lord," she cried, "dost Thou not care (cf. Mk. iv. 38; Jo. x. 13; 1 Pet. v. 7) that my sister hath been leaving me alone to serve. Bid her therefore that she" not merely "help me" but "lend me a helping hand." Here also is a phrase which occurs only once again in the New Testament (Rom. viii. 26). The verb is a double compound signifying literally "lay hold of along with on the opposite side." The idea is that you are striving to lift a burden too heavy for you, and one comes to your aid, and then, you on this side and he on that, you lift it easily. So says the Apostle "the Spirit lendeth a helping hand to our infirmity," employing of the Holy Spirit's gracious ministry the phrase which the Evangelist here uses of sisterly help in a menial office.

Not without amusement our Lord surveyed the heated housewife. And what was His answer? By reason of its homely simplicity and gentle humour it has been much confused by dull copyists. "Martha, Martha," He remonstrated with a glance at the loaded table, "thou art in a fret and stir about many things; but a few are all we need, or rather just one; for" he explains, "Mary hath chosen the good 'portion' (cf. Neh. viii. 10), one which shall not be taken away from her." Giving "portions" was the fashion

at that glad season, and Martha was anxious that the Master should have "a good portion" at her table. But she was spoiling it by her fretfulness. "The gift without the giver is bare," and in giving Him her love Mary had given Him the best portions, one which gladdened Him and moreover did not impoverish herself but rather enriched her.



## MEMOIRS OF OUR LORD'S LATER MINISTRY

xi-xix. 27

### I. INCIDENTS WHILE HE LINGERED IN GALILEE

xi-xiii. 21

#### A LESSON IN PRAYER

xi. 1-13

1 *And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.*

2 *And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.*

3 *Give us \*day by day our daily bread.*

4 *And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.*

5 *And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;*

6 *For a friend of mine †in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?*

7 *And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.*

8 *I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.*

\* Or, for the day. † Or, out of his way.

9 *And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*

10 *For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*

11 *If a son ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?*

12 *Or if he shall ask an egg, will he \*offer him a scorpion?*

13 *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?*

**I**T is remarkable that the disciples should have had to ask the Master for a lesson in prayer. Amid all His manifold instructions He had given them none in that blessed art, and there are two reasons why they wondered thereat. (1) Prayer meant so much for Himself. It was His constant habit, and at every crisis of His ministry, as we have observed, He would fortify Himself by a season of communion with the Father (cf. iii. 21, v. 16, vi. 12, ix. 18, 28, 29). (2) Other teachers instructed their disciples in the heavenly art. John the Baptist had so done, and a note on this passage in the Syriac Version quotes one of the prayers which he had taught his disciples: "O Father, show us Thy glory; O Son (Messiah), cause us to hear Thy voice; O Spirit, sanctify our hearts for evermore. Amen." It is a prayer for the Messiah's advent. Several of the Twelve had been disciples of the Baptist ere they met the Lord (cf. Jo. i. 35, 40), and they naturally marvelled that His manner should so differ from their old master's. There was a sufficient reason, and He unfolded it, as we have already remarked, in His farewell address in the Upper Room when, on the eve of the Infinite Sacrifice whereby He reconciled the world to God, He showed the guarantee of the answering of prayer (cf. Jo. xvi. 23, 24). The dis-

\* Gr. *give*.

tion of Christian prayer is that it is offered "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ," that is, on the ground of His atoning work; and it was impossible until that work had been accomplished, nor could the disciples learn the lesson until they were taught it by the Holy Spirit who came when the Lord took His departure (cf. Jo. xvi. 7, 13).

In response to their appeal He taught them so much as they could at that stage receive. First He gave them that model which is commonly known as "The Lord's Prayer," so beautiful yet, as we have seen, so incomplete inasmuch as it lacks the final seal, the all-prevailing plea, "in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." It is at the first glance somewhat disquieting that St. Luke's report of the Prayer differs largely from St. Matthew's (vi. 9-13), and even more in the original than in our Version, since the best authorities have simply "Father" for "Our Father which art in Heaven" and omit the petition "Thy will be done, as in Heaven, so on earth." And moreover for St. Matthew's "this day" and "forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors" St. Luke has "day by day" and "forgive us our sins; for we ourselves also forgive every one that is indebted to us." What is the explanation?

From the very first the Prayer which our Lord taught His disciples was naturally held in high esteem. It was repeated in unison at every assembly of the brethren; and that primitive directory *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, after quoting it almost word for word as St. Matthew gives it, enjoins that every Christian should offer it thrice daily, whence it was afterwards designated "The Daily Prayer." And surely it would make a blessed difference in our lives if we knelt down thrice daily and repeated it not as a mere form but with heart and understanding. At the same time whatever is repeated by rote, however reverently, is liable to involuntary modifications which tend to become stereotyped; and thus it inevitably happened to the Lord's Prayer in early days when as yet there were no written

Gospels and the record of His life and teaching was an oral tradition. And even after the Gospels were written the process of involuntary modification continued, especially in days when books were scarce and the Scriptures were usually quoted from memory. An example hereof is that variation so generally in vogue: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." How did it originate? Observe how after giving the Model Prayer our Lord, according to St. Matthew (vi. 14, 15), emphasises the petition "Forgive us our debts." "For," says He, "if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you." What more natural than that one who had this admonition in his mind should involuntarily adapt the petition thereto and pray "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us"? This, the current form in those days, was received by the Anglican Liturgy, and thus it has been perpetuated among us.

Surely we should prefer the phraseology which our Lord taught His disciples and which derives a peculiar significance from other passages of His teaching, such as His parables of the unforgiving debtor (Mt. xviii. 23-35) and the debtor who loved so much because he had been so greatly forgiven (Lk. vii. 41-43, 47). Be this as it may, consider those three words which are here brought before us—examples of the rich profusion of terms which Holy Scripture employs in dealing with the malady of the soul and the remedy provided by the Saviour's grace. What does each precisely mean? (1) A "debt" is properly what one owes, involving one's *honour*. An honourable man pays what he owes; and if through inevitable misfortune he could not, he would be ashamed to look the world in the face and would never recover his self-respect until he had paid the uttermost farthing. And here is the thought of the petition: When God of His free mercy forgives us, He not merely remits our debt but affords us an opportunity of retrieving our honour by showing a like mercy to others for His sake.

And so it is written (1 Jo. iv. 11): "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought—we also owe it—to love one another." (2) The Greek word for "sin" properly signifies "missing the mark." So we find it, for example, in the Greek Version of the Old Testament where it is written of the seven hundred chosen men of Benjamin (Jud. xx. 11) that, though left-handed, "every one could sling stones at a hair-breadth, and not *miss*." And sin is always a missing of the mark. Even when at the moment it seems successful, it is a mistake. And (3) a "trespass" means properly a "falling away." Even a true believer may "fall away," but it is written that "though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with His hand" (Ps. xxxvii. 24). And even as we are bidden requite the Lord's forgiveness of our debts by forgiving others, so should we requite our own uplifting by lending a hand to a fallen brother. "Brethren," says the Apostle (Gal. vi. 1 R.V.), "if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye which are spiritual restore such an one."

To the model prayer He adds a parable for the encouragement of despondent believers who are tempted to give up praying because it seems unavailing, because when they pray, there is apparently no response. With that genial humour which He so frequently indulged in converse with His intimates He tells a story of a selfish neighbour. In the middle of the night when he and his household were a-bed he was knocked up by an acquaintance. It was a small house, a peasant's cot, and without rising he demanded impatiently who was there. The untimely visitor explained that a friend of his from a distance had just arrived at his door weary and hungry, and he had no food in his cupboard and desired a loan of three loaves—small rolls of bread. The inmate surlily refused. "Trouble me not" he growled or rather, since it is in the original a colloquial phrase, "Don't bother me," and turned over to fall asleep again. But the visitor would take no denial, and kept knock-



ing and shouting until at length, recognising that it was the only way to be rid of annoyance, the churl got up and gave him what he wanted. What he would not do for friendship's sake, he did for peace' sake—"because of his importunity," literally "his shamelessness," his unabashed persistence.

The parable is an *a fortiori* argument: if a selfish man accedes to troublesome importunity, much more will the Heavenly Father give ear to the cry of His children whom He loves. The broad truth is that earnest prayer will certainly be answered, but this in no wise means that whatever we ask we shall certainly receive if only we persist. True prayer is not only earnest but *believing*, and this involves two essential conditions which our Lord here plainly suggests.

(1) Believing prayer implies trust in God. It does not dictate what He must give. It is not the assertion of our wills but rather their submission to His. It means telling Him our need and leaving Him to supply it in His own wise and gracious way. A child may ask of his father what would hurt him, and then his father will withhold it from him. He will not, according to these two Jewish proverbs which St. Matthew also puts on our Lord's lips, give him a stone when he takes it for a loaf or a serpent when he takes it for a fish, or according to that similar proverb which St. Luke adds, give him a scorpion when he takes it for an egg, as a child might easily do since a scorpion with folded claws looked like an egg. A father will deny his child a hurtful desire, yet he will meet his need by giving him what is truly good, what, had he been wiser, he would have asked. And it is thus that our Heavenly Father deals with us. Oftentimes it would be no blessing but a calamity if He granted our requests, and then He answers our prayers by withholding what we crave.

(2) Believing prayer is unselfish. There are other children besides ourselves in the Father's House, and we must



be mindful of them and never snatch greedily at our own advantage. The lesson is taught in homely fashion by a fable of Æsop which tells of a father with two daughters, one married to a gardener and the other to a potter. Once he visited them; and the gardener's wife asked him to repair to the temple and pray for rain to refresh her husband's herbs, and then her sister would have him pray for dry weather to harden her husband's clay. What the one craved the other dreaded; and therefore he decided that he would simply pray for suitable weather and let God send such weather as pleased Him. Prayer means spreading our case before the Throne of Grace and trustfully resigning it to God's disposal. And then the answer is assured—not perhaps the answer which we expect but that which He sees best. All this is strikingly enforced by St. Luke's paraphrase of our Lord's closing promise (cf. ver. 13 with Mt. vii. 11). "Your Heavenly Father will give," St. Matthew has it, "good things to them that ask Him"; and here it is written that He "will give the Holy Spirit"—that best of all good gifts, the grace which attunes our hearts to the Father's will.

## CHARGE OF ALLIANCE WITH THE DEVIL

xi. 14-36

14 *And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered.*

15 *But some of them said, He casteth out devils through \*Beelzebub the chief of the devils.*

16 *And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven.*

17 *But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth.*

18 *If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.*

19 *And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges.*

20 *But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.*

21 *When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:*

22 *But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.*

23 *He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.*

24 *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.*

25 *And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished.*

26 *Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more*

\* Gr. Beelzebul, and so vers. 18, 19.

wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

27 And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.

28 But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

29 And when, the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.

30 For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.

31 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

32 The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

33 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a \*bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.

34 The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness.

35 Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.

36 If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when †the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.

SEE exposition of Mt. xii. 22-45 and Mk. iii. 20-30. Observe these peculiarities of St. Luke's report. (1) For his indefinite "some of them" (ver. 15) St. Matthew (xii. 24) has "the Pharisees" and St. Mark (iii. 22) more precisely "the Scribes which came down from Jerusalem,"

\* See Mt. v. 15.      † Gr. a candle by its bright shining.

the Sanhedrin's commissioners. The encounter was an incident in the long conflict between our Lord and the Jewish rulers which issued in His crucifixion. (2) Where St. Matthew (xii. 28) has "by the spirit of God" St. Luke has (ver. 20) "the finger of God" (cf. Ex. viii. 19), interpreting to his Gentile readers the Jewish phrase which ere the revelation of the Holy Spirit as a divine Person (cf. Jo. vii. 39) signified merely a divine influence, inspiring men and pointing them the way. (3) Where St. Matthew (xii. 29) and St. Mark (iii. 27) have "house," St. Luke has (ver. 21) not "palace" but "courtyard" or "homestead" (the word translated "fold" in Jo. x. 1, 16). The idea is well illustrated by a rude inscription on the lintel of a door of a ruined cattle-shed at Tsil in the Hauran: "Lord, keep the coming in and the going out of Eusebius." Tsil is an outlying village on the margin of the eastern desert, exposed of old to the incursions of marauding Bedawin; and that godly farmer, unable to protect his homestead, trusted to the protection of the Keeper who neither slumbers nor sleeps (Ps. cxxi). (4) St. Luke, ever observant of womanly devotion, has alone of the Evangelists recorded that moving incident of the woman in the crowd who applauded our Lord's brave dealing with His powerful accusers (vers. 27, 28). Evidently she was a childless woman, and the thought of her heart, involuntarily uttered, was: "O that I had a son like that!" His answer was not a thankless rebuke but a tender consolation; and we catch its purpose in reading that other story recorded by St. Luke alone (xxiii. 27-29)—how as He went His sorrowful way to Calvary the women "bewailed and lamented Him," and He turned to them and bade them rather weep for themselves and their children, since days were coming, days of disaster and suffering, when mothers would cry: "Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck!" Had that woman in

the crowd known what was in store, she would have blessed God that she had no son to share the anguish.

On vers. 33-36 see exposition of Mt. v. 15, vi. 22, 23. Our Lord's purpose is not merely to bless us but to make us a blessing to others. We are "the light of the world," and He kindles His love in our hearts that we may "let our light shine" (cf. Mt. v. 14, 16). (1) The "candle" or rather "lamp" must not be concealed: we must confess Him before men; and (2) it must burn brightly: it must be fed with the oil of grace through faith and prayer.

## AT A PHARISEE'S TABLE

xi. 37-54

37 *And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat.*

38 *And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner.*

39 *And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.*

40 *Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?*

41 *But rather give alms \*of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you.*

42 *But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

43 *Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.*

44 *Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them.*

45 *Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also.*

46 *And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.*

47 *Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.*

48 *Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your*

\* Or, as you are able.



*fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres.*

*49 Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute:*

*50 That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation;*

*51 From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.*

*52 Woe unto you lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye \*hindered.*

*53 And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things:*

*54 Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.*

**H**ERE is another of St. Luke's instances of a Pharisee inviting our Lord to his table proving as we have observed (cf. vii. 36) that the Pharisees were not all His enemies. The meal was neither as our Version has it, "dinner" nor, as the Revisers' marginal note suggests, "breakfast," but rather what we should call "lunch." The word in the original signifies "the early meal," the first regular meal of the day, since breakfast was a light refreshment, generally a piece of bread and some fruit; and it was not until toward noon, when the heat of the day brought work to a close, that the household gathered round the table. The invitation was kindly meant, but the kindness was marred at the very outset by a painful exhibition of Pharisaic prejudice. The ceremonial law enjoined that the hands should be washed before meat (cf. exposition of Mt. xv. 1-20 and Mk. vii. 1-23), and when our Lord neglected the

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rite, His host protested. It was a flagrant discourtesy, since the Pharisee knew his guest's sentiment ere inviting Him to his table; and our Lord administered to him and the rest of the company a stern and merited rebuke. This is included by St. Matthew in the indignant condemnation which our Lord, wearied out by their obduracy, hurled against the Scribes and Pharisees in the Temple-court during the Passion-week (cf. Mt. xxiii, where see exposition), and that is doubtless the actual position of the passage; but St. Luke, dismissing the final condemnation as he does in a single sentence (cf. xx. 46, 47), has aptly introduced it here in accordance with his wonted manner of arranging his material topically rather than chronologically.

Observe these peculiarities of St. Luke's report. (1) Vers. 40, 41 are a striking addition. It may seem as though our Lord disregarded His own solemn admonition (cf. Mt. v. 22) when he styles His critics "Ye fools"; but the word which He employs here is not in the original the same which He censures there. It is the word which He uses again (xii. 20) of the Rich Fool, so observant of his worldly interest, so blind to his eternal welfare, and which St. Paul uses of one who with the miracle of harvest before him yet doubts the kindred miracle of the resurrection of the body (1 Cor. xv. 36); and it signifies properly "senseless," "unperceiving." "Unperceiving men!" our Lord here exclaims, "did not He that made the outside make the inside also? Rather," He continues, "give as alms" not "such things as ye have" but "the things which are within," that is, the contents of their well filled cups and platters. The offense of the Pharisee was their greed and extortion (cf. xvi. 14, xx. 47; Mt. xxiii. 14; Mk. xii. 40); and they thought to cleanse their "inward part" of "extortion and wickedness" by cleansing the outside (cf. ver. 39). But the proper, the only cleansing and restitution—not the washing of the outside of their cups and platters but the sharing

of the outside of their overflowing contents with the widows and orphans whom they had plundered. (2) In the midst of His condemnation of Pharisaic hypocrisy one of the company, a "lawyer," that is, a Scribe or Rabbi, a representative of the learned order of the Pharisees, the interpreters of the Sacred Law, raised his voice in protest (ver. 45). "Teacher," said he, "in saying this Thou insultest (the word rendered "entreat spitefully" in xviii. 32, xxii. 6) even us." It seemed outrageous that learned and reverend personages should be thus handled; but our Lord replied that their position only imposed on them a heavier responsibility, and they were in truth the prime offenders. They were inveterate persecutors, and history was their damning indictment. That is the Evangelist's meaning when he ascribes to "the Wisdom of God" that prophecy which St. Matthew (xxiii. 34) puts on our Lord's own lips. For, as we have seen (cf. exposition of Mt. xi. 19), "the Wisdom of God" means His providential dealings with the children of men; and the past record of the Scribes was a revelation at once of their implacable hostility to the counsel of God and of the retribution which awaited them. (3) He shows the unhappy issue of that banquet which should rather have fostered in the breasts of the Pharisees a kindly feeling toward our Lord. "When," he says according to the true text, "He was come out from thence," that is, had left the Pharisee's house, "the Scribes and the Pharisees began to urge Him vehemently" or rather "to cherish a fierce grudge against Him (the phrase rendered "have a quarrel against Him" in Mk. vi. 19)." His censure rankled in their minds, and they set themselves to be avenged on Him. The word for "provoke," which occurs only here in the New Testament, is one which betrays St. Luke's Greek culture. It was used originally of a teacher dictating to his pupils a passage to be learned by heart and repeated from memory, and afterwards of the questioning of the pupil on his les-



son. And so the Evangelist means here that the arrogant Scribes took occasion to put hard questions to our Lord, thinking to puzzle Him and thereby discredit Him with the multitude. "They began to put Him through a course of examination about many things."



## ADMONITION OF THE DISCIPLES

xii. 1-12

1 *In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.*

2 *For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.*

3 *Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.*

4 *And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.*

5 *But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.*

6 *Are not five sparrows sold for two \*farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?*

7 *But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.*

8 *Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God:*

9 *But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.*

10 *And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven.*

11 *And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what ye shall answer, or what ye shall say:*

\* See Mt. x. 29.

*12 For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.*

THE encounters between our Lord and the rulers appealed to the populace and attracted large crowds of interested spectators; and the Evangelist depicts the situation in graphic phraseology: "In these circumstances when the multitude were assembled in their myriads" or "their tens of thousands (cf. Ac. xxi. 20), so that they trode one upon another," a phrase like St. Mark's when he tells how on another occasion "they pressed upon Him" (iii. 10), literally "tumbled over Him, that they might touch Him." So far as it betokened sympathy with Him in the controversy their enthusiasm would be welcome to our Lord; but it was largely mere curiosity and noise, and "He began to say to His disciples" not "first of all" but simply "first." They, especially the Twelve, were His "first," His chief concern, and He improved the occasion by admonishing them how they should bear themselves when, as they surely would, they too encountered like hostility in the prosecution of their mission. Much of His admonition is given by St. Matthew elsewhere, chiefly in his report of our Lord's commission to the Twelve (cf. x. 26-33, xii. 31, 32, where see exposition).

First of all, He warns them against cowardly dissimulation (vers. 1-3). As we have seen (cf. exposition of Mt. vi. 2), "hypocrisy" means properly playing a part like an actor on the stage; and so did the Pharisees, wearing a mask of holiness, while their hearts were impure, that they might win applause. Their spirit was contagious, like the leaven which permeates the mass of dough (cf. Mt. xiii. 33); and the disciples would be guilty of "hypocrisy" in another form if, to escape persecution, they concealed their faith. The Gospel which they were learning in private intercourse with the Master, was a message for the world, and they must fearlessly proclaim it at all hazards. When

John Bunyan was arrested for preaching, he was sentenced to three months' imprisonment and thereafter, if he persisted, to banishment from the realm; and what was his answer? "If I were out of prison to-day, I would preach the Gospel again to-morrow, by the help of God."

Then He reminds them that there is a more terrible doom than death (vers. 4, 5). Better that their mortal bodies should be slain by their persecutors than that they should sell their immortal souls to the Devil (cf. exposition of Mt. x. 28). Of nothing else need they be afraid, since God cared for them (vers. 6, 7). The meanest thing is His creature, and it is wonderfully fashioned. Examine a gnat's wing through the microscope, and see in its exquisite tracery what care, what skill He has lavished upon it. The telescope, it has been truly said, reveals the Creator's greatness but the microscope reveals His goodness. The least of the creatures which He has wrought so curiously, must needs be precious in His sight. He marks a sparrow's fall (cf. exposition of Mt. x. 29), and is He regardless of us whose very hairs He has numbered? And what is the conclusion whither the argument tends? It is in no wise that by reason of God's care we are immune from adversity, but that, if we face them bravely and believingly, He will surely turn our sufferings to our eternal profit. It is by conflict that victory is won, and He loves us too well to spare us the ordeal. So Froissart has told how at the battle of Cressy, when the Black Prince was "fiercely fought withal and sore handled," he sent a messenger to the king his father, entreating succour. "Return," was the answer, "to him and to them that sent you hither, and say to them that they send no more to me for any adventure that falleth, so long as my son is alive: and also say to them that they suffer him this day to win his spurs."

The penalty of cowardice is terrible (vers. 8-10). (1) If we deny Him now, He will deny us on the solemn Day of Judgment, And what is it to deny Him? "He is denied,"

says St. Augustine, "not only by one who says that He is not the Christ but by one who, when he is, denies that he is a Christian." A believer who dare not confess the Lord denies Him no less than the infidel who scoffs at His claims. (2) Cowardice is a stifling of conscience, a trifling with conviction; and this is "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit," the sin which has no forgiveness (see exposition of Mt. xii. 31, 32 and Mk. iii. 28-30). Our spiritual life depends on our listening to His voice; and if we keep faithful to Him, He will work in our souls and in every time of difficulty He will teach what to say and do (vers. 11, 12).

## A LESSON IN WORLDLY-MINDEDNESS

xii. 13-34

13 *And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.*

14 *And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?*

15 *And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.*

16 *And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:*

17 *And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?*

18 *And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.*

19 *And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.*

20 *But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night \*thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?*

21 *So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*

22 *And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.*

23 *The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.*

24 *Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap;*

\* Or, do they require thy soul.



### 332 COMMENTARY ON THE FOUR GOSPELS

*which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?*

25 *And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?*

26 *If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?*

27 *Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.*

28 *If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?*

29 *And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, \*neither be ye of doubtful mind.*

30 *For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.*

31 *But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

32 *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*

33 *Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.*

34 *For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

**I**N the midst of our Lord's solemn discourse a voice from the crowd addressed Him. He was accustomed to interruptions, and to an appeal for help He always lent a ready ear (cf. iv. 31-35; v. 17-20). This was indeed an appeal for help, yet it vexed and disappointed Him and incurred a stern rebuke. For what was the suppliant's trouble? It was not sickness needing the touch of the Good Physician's healing hand, nor a sense of sin and a longing for the Saviour's word of absolution. It was a quarrel over the division of his dead father's property. Rightly or wrongly, he conceived that his brother had dealt unfairly by him, and

*\*Or, live not in careful suspense.*



he would have our Lord intervene on his behalf. The settlement of such disputes lay with the court of the Synagogue, and the suggestion that He should usurp the office was indeed, after a fashion, a tribute to our Lord, evincing reverence for His authority and confidence in His judgment. At the same time it betrayed a gross misunderstanding of His mission and a dull obliviousness of the solemn words which had just fallen from His lips. "Man," said He impatiently and not without contempt (cf. xxii. 58, 60; Rom. ii. 1, 3, ix. 20), "who appointed Me (so in vers. 42, 44; cf. Ac. vi. 3) a judge or a divider over you?"

Thus curtly dismissing the petition, He turned to the bystanders. "Take heed," said He, pointing the moral of the incident, "and guard you from every sort of grasping greed; for it is not so that when one has enough and to spare, his life is derived from his possessions." And then He proceeded to illustrate this truth and enforce it by a parable. It is the story of a shrewd, industrious, and successful man who made a fool's bargain. Observe where his fault lay. It has been well said that there are three questions which will be put to every one on the Day of Reckoning: "How much did you make? How did you make it? And how did you use it?" That prosperous farmer could answer the first two satisfactorily. He had made a large fortune; and this was all to his credit. For it is the duty of every man to improve his opportunities to the utmost. His success was no shame to him; on the contrary, it was a meritorious achievement, the reward of his industry and skill. Nor is it suggested that he had enriched himself unrighteously by "making a corner in wheat" (cf. Pr. xi. 26) or "sweating" his labourers (cf. Ja. v. 4). He had made much, and he had made it honourably; but then what use had he made of it? It was here that he failed. God's judgment on him was "Thou fool!" or rather "Thou unperceiving man!" For so signifies the word in the original (cf. xi. 40). It denotes one who disregards plain facts and

omits them from his calculations. And that was this rich farmer's blunder. Alert to worldly chances, he was oblivious of eternal interests. He left them out of his reckoning. At the outset perhaps he meant to take thought in good time of the things which belonged to his eternal peace; but he always put off to "a more convenient season." And see the result. When at length he had amassed more wealth than he could employ, he called a halt and thus addressed his soul: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry." Observe the grim tragedy. So cankered by worldliness was his spiritual nature, so atrophied by neglect, that he could think of no better for his soul, which was made for God and could never rest until it found rest in Him, than feasting and merry-making. And even this poor solace was denied him. "God said unto him, Thou unperceiving man, this night thy soul shall be required of thee," literally, as the margin has it, "they require thy soul of thee." It is surely a far-fetched fancy which takes this to mean that an indignant peasantry would that night invade his homestead, fire his barns, and murder their oppressor. It was rather, according to the Jewish idea (cf. xvi. 22), the angels, God's messengers, His ministers that do His pleasure, that would summon his soul, "requiring," "asking back" the precious trust which had been committed to him and which he had so neglected. Just when he thought to enjoy the fruit of his labours, he was called away; and the riches which he had heaped up were left for others to gather and to wrangle over. A lost soul and a disputed property!—surely it was a fool's bargain.

And now our Lord points the moral of the tale, discoursing of the unreasonableness, the futility, and the irreligiousness of worldly care. This exquisite passage is included by St. Matthew in that collection of our Lord's sayings commonly called "the Sermon on the Mount" (cf. Mt. vi. 19-34, where see exposition); and it only remains here that we

should observe several features of our text. (1) See how aptly St. Matthew's report fits into St. Luke's. "So," says the latter, "is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God," and here St. Matthew takes up the theme (vi. 19): "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth." (2) For St. Matthew's "Be not anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink?" (vi. 31) St. Luke has (ver. 29): "Seek not ye what ye shall eat and what ye shall drink, *neither be ye of doubtful mind*"—a picturesque phrase in the original, all the more congenial to our Evangelist since it had a medical use. It signifies literally "to be in suspense," and it is felicitously rendered here by Matthew Arnold "Do not be all abroad, *do not be in the air.*" (3) Ver. 32 is peculiar to St. Luke, and its suitability to the occasion appears when we remember that our Lord is here addressing His disciples (cf. ver. 22) whom He sent forth "as lambs in the midst of wolves" (cf. x. 3; Mt. x. 16). (4) "Sell that ye have, and give alms" (ver. 33) is also peculiar to St. Luke, though the lesson is common. It is a frequent lesson of Holy Scripture, and it is taught most strikingly in the parable of the Rich Fool. Idle wealth is not merely unprofitable but insecure; and it is our wisdom to turn it to account, while we may, by employing it for the good of our fellow men and the glory of God. It is miserable to put one's money into "bags which wax old," "bags with holes" (Hag. i. 6), and find it slipped away; and more miserable still to think of one's painful hoardings being squandered when one is gone.

## INCENTIVES TO UNWORLDLINESS (xii. 35-59)

### 1. THE UNCERTAINTY OF THE DAY OF RECKONING

xii. 35-48

35 *Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;*

36 *And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.*

37 *Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.*

38 *And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.*

39 *And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.*

40 *Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.*

41 *Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?*

42 *And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?*

43 *Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.*

44 *Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.*

45 *But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken;*

46 *The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will \*cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.*

47 *And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.*

48 *But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.*

**M**OST of this passage is included by St. Matthew in his report of our Lord's discourse on things to come on the night preceding that of His arrest (cf. Mt. xxiv. 43-45, where see exposition). It may be that the words were actually spoken on this occasion; for toward the close of His ministry our Lord frequently admonished the Twelve of the future, and it was in accordance with St. Matthew's topical arrangement of his material that he should assign to that supreme occasion sayings which were spoken in various connections.

The Lord has been warning His disciples against worldliness in its two forms: the rich man's worldliness—setting his heart on material interests to the exclusion of eternal concerns; and the poor man's worldliness—fretting about food and raiment as though God had no care for His children. And now He proceeds to exhibit the sovereign incentive to unworldliness—a lively expectation of His reappearing, His “coming again” in any of the senses which that phrase bore on His lips (see exposition of Mt. x. 16-23). Here He teaches two lessons.

(1) Whenever and however it may befall, His “coming again” is, for His faithful people, a glad prospect. He compares it to the return of a bridegroom. The scene of a Jewish wedding was generally the bride's home (see exposi-

\* Or, *cut him off*.



tion of Mt. xxv. 1). The bridegroom furnished the wedding-feast; and when it was over, he conducted her to his own house, the home which he had provided for her. His return thither was always late—"in the second watch," that is, between nine o'clock and midnight, or even, if the feast were protracted, "in the third watch," that is, between midnight and three o'clock in the morning; and the duty of his servants was to await his arrival and have all in readiness for the reception of their master and his bride. And if they discharged their office faithfully, they earned his commendation and shared the rejoicing of the homecoming. Even so our Lord bids us prepare for His return. For the careless indeed there may well be terror in the thought of His "coming again"; but for such as "have loved His appearing" (2 Tim. iv. 8) it is a glorious hope.

(2) Since the day of our Lord's coming is unknown, our security lies in constant readiness. This lesson was elicited by a question from the lips of Peter—one of those impulsive and sometimes inconsiderate questions which he was so prone to interject. Our Lord has hitherto been particularly addressing His disciples (cf. ver. 22), and evidently it embarrassed them to be thus admonished in presence of the multitude. "Lord," interposed Peter, "speakest Thou this parable unto us or also unto all?" The Lord's answer was that He was speaking to every one who realised that his life was a sacred trust and recognised his responsibility; and He enforces His admonition by a realistic picture of a case frequent in the ancient East and wherever despotism has prevailed—a steward whom his lord on going abroad left in charge of his estate and his household and who, like Angelo, the deputy of Duke Vincentio in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, shamefully abused his trust by tyranny and debauchery. Woe to us if, when our Lord returns, we should be surprised in drunken revelry! What manner of account could we then render of our stewardship? It is told of Dr. Samuel Johnson that during his last illness on learning that



there was no hope of his recovery, "Then," said he, "I will take no more physic, not even my opiates; for I have prayed that I may render up my soul to God unclouded." Never should we fall asleep without committing ourselves to the Saviour's grace and praying that, if we die before we wake, we may open our eyes in Heaven; and how terrible for a man to sink, with evil passions in his heart and foul words on his lips, into a drunken slumber and awake before the Judgment-seat with never a moment for repentance! And the measure of our guilt when we are there arraigned will be the knowledge which we had of our Lord's requirements, and the opportunities vouchsafed us. Here is His answer to Peter's question. He was speaking indeed to all His hearers, but His admonition bore especially on His disciples. "Take heed to yourselves," said Richard Baxter to his fellow-ministers; "for your sins have more heinous aggravation than other men's. It is noted among King Alphonsus's sayings, that a great man cannot commit a small sin; we may much more say, that a learned man, or a teacher of others, cannot commit a small sin; or at least that the sin is great, as committed by him, which is smaller in another."

## 2. THE APPROACHING ORDEAL

xii. 49-53

49 *I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?*

50 *But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I \*straitened till it be accomplished!*

51 *Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division:*

52 *For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.*

53 *The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.*

**C**F. Mt. x. 34-36. Our Lord's argument here is just the Apostle's admonition where he counsels us to hold lightly by the world and its affections in view of "the present distress" (1 Cor. vii. 26-33).

It is good to be last not first,  
 Pending the present distress;  
 It is good to hunger and thirst,  
 So it be for righteousness.  
 It is good to spend and be spent,  
 It is good to watch and to pray:  
 Life and Death make a goodly Lent  
 So it leads us to Easter Day.

He begins by setting forth His own example in language which has somewhat perplexed interpreters, and which is

\* Or, *pained*.

best taken thus with Origen, that brilliant teacher of Alexandria: "It is fire that I came to cast upon the earth: and what will I? Would that it were already kindled!" The Gospel is indeed a message of peace, but peace attained through sore conflict. Redemption is a purifying conflagration; and our Lord did not shrink from it. He would have it kindled forthwith that the beneficent work might be the sooner accomplished. Nor would He be a mere spectator of the ordeal. "Yea," He says, "I have a baptism to be baptised with" (cf. Mk. x. 38)—a baptism of blood—"and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!" That was the road which He was taking, and He calls us to follow Him there loyally and fearlessly. His example is our inspiration.

Less dreary seems the untried way  
Since He has left His footprints there.

And so says the Apostle (2 Cor. v. 14, 15), using the same word which is rendered "straitened" here: "The love of Christ *constraineth* us; because we thus judge, that One died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again."

## 3. DISCERNING THE TIME

xii. 54-59

54 *And he said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is.*

55 *And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass.*

56 *Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?*

57 *Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?*

58 *When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison.*

59 *I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last \*mite.*

THE disciples would understand His reference, but it would be hidden from such as were strangers to His teaching and never dreamed either of the tragedy of the Cross or of the disaster impending over the Jewish people. And so He turns not to "the people" but to "the multitudes" and upbraids them with their blindness to the plain evidences of the approaching issue. Especially in Galilee they were skilled in reading the signs of the weather, so important for fisherfolk and husbandmen. A sure sign of rain was the appearance of a cloud floating up from the sea with a westerly breeze, and a southerly wind from the desert laden

\* See Bk. xii. 42.

with a blinding mist of fine sand brought scorching heat. They could "discern (literally "prove" or "test") the face of the earth," but they failed to discern the tokens of God's providential purposes at that "time" or rather "crisis." "Ye hypocrites" says our Lord; and we catch His meaning when we remember the proper signification of the phrase—"ye play-actors." As the Psalmist has it (xxxix. 6), they were "walking in a vain shew," busying themselves on the surface, oblivious of the underlying realities. And they were inexcusable. "Why," He asks, "do ye not even of yourselves pronounce the righteous judgment?" And what He means by "pronouncing the righteous judgment" He illustrates by an example which St. Matthew has introduced in "the Sermon on the Mount" (cf. Mt. v. 25, 26, where see exposition). It was a Jewish maxim that rather than suffer the vexation and loss of litigation wise men will come to an agreement between themselves; and so, says our Lord, should we forestall the judgment of God by "pronouncing of ourselves the righteous judgment." "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (1 Cor. xi. 31).

## A CALL TO REPENTANCE

xiii. 1-9

1 *There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilæans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.*

2 *And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilæans were sinners above all the Galilæans, because they suffered such things?*

3 *I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

4 *Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were \*sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?*

5 *I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

6 *He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.*

7 *Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?*

8 *And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it:*

9 *And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.*

“**N**OW there arrived”—the word rendered elsewhere (cf. Jo. vii. 6, xi, 28; Ac. x. 21, 33, xvii. 6) “is come” or “came” (Ac. xii. 20), always with a suggestion of eager haste—“some at that very crisis, bringing Him tid-

\* Or, debtors.



ings," distressful tidings of one of those atrocities so frequent during the unhappy governorship of Pontius Pilate. Nowhere was the spirit of patriotism stronger than in Galilee, and it had of late been fanned by the popular persuasion that our Lord was the Messiah, the national deliverer; and a company of Galilean worshippers, suspected of treasonable designs, had been massacred by Pilate's soldiers while presenting their offerings at the altar in the Temple-court. It was probably the survivors who brought the tidings; and it appears that they had a reason for seeking out our Lord and telling Him the story. It was a Jewish belief that calamity was always a divine judgment. "Remember, I pray thee," argued Eliphaz the Temanite of old (Job iv. 7-9), "who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off? By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of His nostrils are they consumed." The fugitives had arrived in time to hear our Lord's discourse on God's care for His people and the impending doom of the unfaithful; and this had aggravated their misgiving that the atrocity which they had witnessed and so narrowly escaped was a manifestation of divine displeasure.

And what was our Lord's answer? First He bade them dismiss that disquieting inference of a crude theology. It in no wise followed that either those hapless Galileans or the eighteen victims of another shocking tragedy which had occurred at Jerusalem recently when a tower by the Pool of Siloam had collapsed, were doomed for their sins. At the same time, He proceeds, there was a lesson in such happenings. To every discerning eye (cf. xii. 56) that massacre was a premonition of the impending doom of the Jewish people. It was, as Josephus remarks, their false ideal of the Messianic Kingdom and the political unrest which it engendered that precipitated the awful doom of Jerusalem in the year 70 when Rome, weary of ever recurring insurrection, laid the rebellious city in ruins and scattered the survivors of the siege over the face of the earth. And here our

Lord takes occasion to warn His hearers. There was only one way of escape—that the Jewish people should recognise the true Messiah and abandon their wild dream of a national deliverer. “I tell you, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

And then He enforced His warning by a parable. It was not merely Rome’s patience that was being exhausted by the nation’s obduracy but God’s. And truly she was inexcusable. What privileges she had enjoyed! She was like a fig-tree planted, not as fig-trees generally were, by the wayside (cf. Jo. i. 48) but in the rich soil of a vineyard, like that fig-tree which our Lord during the Passion-week found flourishing in an orchard on Mount Olivet (cf. Mt. xxi. 18, 19; Mk. xi. 12–14); yet despite her opportunities she had remained barren. Pliny tells us that it took a fig-tree three years to attain maturity, and by reason of God’s gracious dealings with her throughout the long course of her history Israel was like a fig-tree which had not merely had ample time for maturing but had been granted a respite as long again. “Lo, these three years have I come, seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and I find none.” Only for the elect’s sake and their intercession had the nation been spared so long (cf. Mt. xxiv. 22), but her day of grace was nearly run.

## HEALING OF A CRIPPLED WOMAN ON THE SABBATH

xiii. 10-21

10 *And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.*

11 *And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.*

12 *And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.*

13 *And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.*

14 *And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.*

15 *The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?*

16 *And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?*

17 *And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.*

18 *Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it?*

19 *It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.*

20 *And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God?*

21 *It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three \*measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.*

ON the Jewish law of Sabbath-observance see exposition of Mt. xii. 1-8. One Sabbath in the course of His farewell progress through inland Galilee He was teaching in a synagogue, and among His hearers was a woman who for eighteen long years had suffered, apparently from a rheumatic affection, till her body was warped and crooked. She was helpless like a fettered prisoner. The sight of her affliction moved Him to pity, and He laid His kind hands upon her and healed her. The miracle pleased the congregation, but it was an offence to the ruler of the synagogue and he raised a protest, rebuking not our Lord but the people. Evidently he shrank from the discourtesy of directly censuring a distinguished stranger; and our Lord, according to the true text which reads not "Thou hypocrite" but "Ye hypocrites," observed a corresponding restraint by apostrophising the Pharisaic order rather than humiliating the ruler in presence of his people. The grievance was that the miracle was a violation of the Sabbath-law, since the rule was that only where life was in danger was it permissible to heal on the Sabbath (cf. exposition of Mt. xii. 9-14), and there was no urgency in the woman's case. She had suffered for eighteen years, and her healing might have been postponed until evening when the Sabbath ended. Our Lord met the objection by a telling argument. It was "work" to water cattle, yet it had to be done on the Sabbath lest the beasts should die; and to a Jewish mind that would have been worse than cruelty: it would have been loss. And so the Rabbinical casuists had found a way out of the impasse. It was allowable, they argued, for one not merely to untether his ox or ass but to draw water for it, if only one did not

\* See Mt. xiii. 33.

bring the water and place it before the animal but just led it to the water and let it drink of its own accord. Thus they could strain the law where property was concerned, but where it was a question of relieving a fellow-creature they insisted on its literal observance.

On vers. 18-21 see exposition of Mt. xiii. 31-33 and Mk. iv. 30-32.

## 2. INCIDENTS ON THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM

xiii. 22-xix. 28.

## A QUIBBLING QUESTION

xiii. 22-30

22 *And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem.*

23 *Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them,*

24 *Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

25 *When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:*

26 *Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.*

27 *But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.*

28 *There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.*

29 *And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.*

30 *And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.*

**C**ONTINUING his memoirs of our Lord's later ministry the Evangelist now recounts a succession of incidents which befell in the course of His progress from Galilee to



Jerusalem. At each town and village along the route He discoursed to the people; and there would be a peculiar urgency in His appeals as He thought that never more would they see His face or hear His voice until they confronted Him on His throne of judgment. Once when He had been discoursing on salvation, one of His hearers was deeply moved. "Lord," he inquired, "are they few that be saved?" literally "that are being saved," "that are on the way to salvation." It was a theological question much discussed in those days. The common opinion was that all Israel would have "a portion in the life to come"; but there were some who took a darker view, recalling that of all the multitude that came forth from Egypt only two entered the Promised Land. Why did the man raise that vexed question? Just as nowadays souls under conviction will quibble about Election when they would shirk decision, so he thought to raise a side-issue. It was a poor evasion, and our Lord checked it and presented the real issue. "The question is not whether the saved be few or many but whether you be of their number. Strive to enter in by the strait gate" or rather "to enter through the narrow door." There was a saying of old "All noble things are difficult"; and it was a commonplace of the ancient moralists that the path to wisdom was steep and hard, and was entered by a narrow gate (cf. Mt. vii. 13, 14, where see exposition). This had passed into a proverb, and here our Lord applies it to the winning of salvation. "There is the door, yonder the path: enter and climb." It is not enough merely to "seek" or "want" to enter; we must "strive"—the word rendered "fight" in Jo. xviii. 36. We must gird ourselves to the task and resolutely achieve it. It is like the storming of a citadel: it is not enough that we should compass the walls with longing eyes; we must assail the gate and press in. Then He borrows another image from Jewish theology, comparing the felicity of the Kingdom of Heaven to a glad banquet; and He warns His hearers of their peculiar responsibility.

He had dwelt among them and had preached in their streets, and they were Jews, children of Abraham; but these high privileges would merely aggravate their guilt if they remained impenitent and unbelieving. The heathen who believed would enter, but they would be excluded. Cf. Mt. vii. 22, 23, viii. 11, 12, xix. 30.

## A FRIENDLY WARNING

xiii. 31-35

31 *The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee.*

32 *And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.*

33 *Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.*

34 *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!*

35 *Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*

OUR Lord was continually beset by importunities; and—not “the same day” but—“in that very hour” He was again accosted. Ever since his execution of John the Baptist Herod Antipas, the dissolute and crafty Tetrarch of Galilee, had been disquieted by the rumours which reached him of our Lord’s doings (cf. ix. 7-9); and, alarmed after the suspicious manner of a tyrant by His popular influence, he had now resolved to put Him also to death. His intention was known to the Jewish rulers, and they would generally approve it; but, as we have seen, they were not all His enemies. He had friends among the Pharisees; and these Pharisees who now appear on the scene came on a friendly

errand. The Evangelist's language proves this; for the word "came" denotes in the original a reverential approach (cf. viii. 44; Heb. iv. 16, vii. 25). They "approached" or "drew near" (cf. Heb. x. 22) to Him that they might warn Him of His danger and bid Him escape over the Galilean frontier. "Begone," they adjured Him, "and go Thy way hence; for Herod is wishing to kill Thee."

He heard it unmoved, and charged them to convey a defiance to the tyrant. "Go your way, and say to this fox: 'Behold, I cast out devils and accomplish healings to-day and to-morrow, and on the third day My work is finished.'"

It was scriptural phraseology (cf. Hos. vi. 2): Yet a day or two of faithful continuance in His appointed work, and then the appointed end. And meanwhile He was secure, according to that saying of Thomas Fuller: "God's children are immortal while their Father hath any thing for them to do on earth; and death, 'that beast, cannot kill them, till first they have finished their testimony' (Rev. xi. 7)."

He knew the inevitable issue, and He would not shun it. It was at Jerusalem that He must die, and thither He would go. "I must go My way to-day and to-morrow and the next day; for," He adds with mournful irony, "it cannot be that a prophet perish outwith Jerusalem." And then He poured forth that poignant lament over the city so beloved, so irresponsible, so near her doom, which St. Matthew, omitting the present incident, has annexed to His final denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees (cf. Mt. xxiii. 37-39, where see exposition). Oh, if only her people had hearkened to His message and sheltered beneath His love, like a brood of chickens beneath their mother's wings when the hawk is circling overhead! Their doom was sealed, and their only hope lay in their one day recognising Him as their Saviour.

## OUR LORD'S TABLE-TALK

xiv. I-24

1 *And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him.*

2 *And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy.*

3 *And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?*

4 *And they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go;*

5 *And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?*

6 *And they could not answer him again to these things.*

7 *And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them,*

8 *When thou are bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him;*

9 *And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.*

10 *But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.*

11 *For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

12 *Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy*

*brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee.*

13 *But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:*

14 *And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.*

15 *And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.*

16 *Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:*

17 *And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.*

18 *And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.*

19 *And another said I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.*

20 *And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.*

21 *So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.*

22 *And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.*

23 *And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.*

24 *For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.*

**O**UR Lord went His way, and on reaching another town on the route He experienced another evidence of that friendliness which, as St. Luke delights to record, was so frequently displayed toward Him by members of the Pharisaic order. A leading Pharisee in the town invited Him on the Sabbath Day to his table, and invited also a



company of his associates to meet Him. It is written that "they were watching Him," but it was, as the sequel proves, in a spirit of curiosity rather than hostility. Despite their narrow prejudices they were reasonable men, and they may perhaps, like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathæa (cf. Jo. xix. 38, 39), have been disciples at heart though afraid to confess it. It is an exemplification of the tendency of scrupulosity to run into laxity that the Sabbath was the day which the Jews chose for their social gatherings, salving their consciences by eating their food cold to avoid the "work" of cooking. It was the fashion, as we have seen (cf. vii. 37, 38), at a Jewish feast for strangers to enter that they might watch its progress and listen to the table-talk; and among the rest on this occasion a man afflicted with dropsy entered and took his stand before our Lord in the hope of engaging the Divine Healer's notice. The company observed the mute appeal, and though they said nothing, our Lord knew well what their thoughts were. "Is it lawful," He asked, "to heal on the Sabbath?" They not merely "held their peace" but, as the word in the original here signifies (cf. Ac. xi. 18, xxi. 14, where it is rendered "ceased"), "kept quiet," implying acquiescence. Thereupon He rose from His couch and, taking hold of the suppliant, healed him and dismissed him. Then He resumed His place and with a characteristic argument assured the company of the legitimacy of His action by quoting a prescription of their Rabbinical law of Sabbath-observance. The rule was that if any creature—"one's ass or one's ox" or rather, according to the true text, "one's son or even one's ox"—fell into a well (the same word as in Jo. iv. 11) on the Sabbath and was likely to perish, then notwithstanding the prohibition of doing any work there an immediate rescue should be effected. Just as He had likened the rheumatic woman to a bound creature (cf. xiii. 16), so here He likens the drop-sical man to one submerged in water.

It was a telling argument, and it dispelled their scruples.

The entertainment proceeded, and He discoursed to the company with a freedom which evinces the intimacy of His relations with them. First He had a word for His fellow-guests (vers. 7-11). "When," He says, "thou art bidden to a wedding" or rather "a wedding feast"; and is there not here a suggestion that the scene was the town of Cana, which lay on the route from the inlands of Galilee to Jerusalem? It was there that He had wrought His first miracle (cf. Jo. ii. 1-11); and the impression left by it and His subsequent healing of the nobleman's son (cf. iv. 46-54) would explain the cordiality of His present reception. There would thus be a gentle rebuke in the otherwise inexplicable phrase—a tacit contrast between His experience at that wedding feast in a peasant home and the behaviour of this reverend company. For see what had occurred. The chief place at a feast was next the host. It was assigned to the most honourable guest, each successive place marking a lesser dignity; and there had at the outset been a dispute about precedence (cf. Mt. xxiii. 6). He had observed it not without amusement, and now He improves the occasion by plying the company with gentle raillery. He borrows from the wise old Book of Proverbs (xxv. 6, 7) a cynical maxim, which warns us that by grasping at honour we simply court humiliation. Better take the lowest place and be summoned to a higher than usurp the highest and be required to relinquish it in favour of a more distinguished personage. Pretension betokens vulgarity. "There is," says Addison, "infinitely more to do about Place and Precedency in a Meeting of Justices' Wives than in an Assembly of Duchesses." Our exemplar here is our Lord who "came not to be ministered unto but to minister." "Love," says St. Thomas à Kempis, "to be unknown and to be made of no reputation."

Then He turned to the host and read him too a lesson (vers. 12-14). It as the fashion for rich men to give

sumptuous entertainments, inviting guests of their own social rank who would in turn pay them a like compliment; and the result was pride and jealousy. Far better bestow entertainment where it is needed. Minister to the poor; and though they can make you no return, you will receive a rich recompense "at the resurrection of the righteous."

It was a sharp admonition, and it pierced home. The company winced, and one of them essayed awkwardly to cover his embarrassment. Jewish theology pictured the felicity of the Kingdom of Heaven under the image of a glad festival (cf. xiii. 28, 29), and catching up our Lord's phrase "the resurrection of the righteous," he exclaimed sanctimoniously: "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God." It was a poor attempt to turn the arrow of conviction by a pious commonplace, but it merely exposed the company to a deeper thrust. Our Lord retorted with a parable, illustrating the worthlessness of the hollow pretension, the heartless formalism, which passed current with the Pharisees for religion—the parable of the Great Supper and the politely insolent guests (vers. 16–24). The host invited a large company, and they all accepted. When the day arrived, he sent according to eastern custom to remind them of their engagement, and they all cried off. Their language was studiously polite, but their excuses were mere pretexts. They simply did not wish to come, and their affectation of courtesy was in truth an aggravation of the insult. The host was justly indignant. He determined that his entertainment would go forward, and he sent to the streets of the town and the hedgerows of the surrounding country and gathered in all the poor, homeless folk till his festal chamber was packed. He might have invited others of his rich neighbours, but he preferred the destitute. It was as though he had said to the grandees who had mocked him with their smooth talk: "I will have none of your sort. These outcasts are worthier than you."

The parable had an application beyond the immediate occasion. It was a warning of the rejection of unbelieving Israel. The smooth-tongued recusants were the Pharisees; the poor of the city-streets were the Jewish outcasts, the tax-gatherers and sinners; and the vagabonds sheltering beneath the hedges were the Gentiles.

## THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

xiv. 25-35

25 *And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,*

26 *If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.*

27 *And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.*

28 *For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?*

29 *Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,*

30 *Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.*

31 *Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?*

32 *Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.*

33 *So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.*

34 *Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?*

35 *It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

OUR Lord's departure from that friendly town was a triumphal progress. He was going up to Jerusalem, and if even the Twelve, still clinging to the Jewish idea of



the Messianic Kingdom, imagined that He was going thither to proclaim Himself the King of Israel and seat Himself on the throne of His father David (cf. xix. 11; Mt. xx. 20-28), what wonder that the townsfolk shared the notion? It was a dazzling prospect, and they trooped after Him, meaning to escort Him all the way to the sacred capital and witness His triumph. He knew the vain thought of their hearts, and it grieved Him. He must disillusionise them; and He turned round and faced them, and set the grim reality before them.

First of all He told them plainly what they must expect if they cast in their lot with Him (vers. 26, 27). They were dreaming of a throne in Jerusalem and thinking to share His triumph; but what was the reality? Sacrifice, suffering, shame. They must be prepared to surrender everything, not only their worldly possessions but their dearest affections and their very lives. See how strongly He expresses it. Already He had warned His Apostles that they must love Him more than father or mother, son or daughter (cf. Mt. x. 37); but now that He may drive the stern truth home to those deluded minds He tells the multitude that they must "*hate* father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and their own lives also." It is indeed a startling requirement, especially on the lips of Incarnate Love; and grievously is it abused by the monastic interpretation which finds in it a reprobation of those natural affections which He has taught us to recognise as God's image in our souls (cf. Mt. vii. 11). "Unless," said St. Thomas à Kempis, "one be unfettered from all creatures, he will be unable to attend unto divine things." "As much love," said St. Philip Neri, "as we give to creatures, just so much we steal from the Creator." It was not thus that our Lord taught when He required that we should love our very enemies and prove our love of God by loving our neighbours too. What then does He mean when He here requires of one who would follow Him that he should "*hate*" his dearest



kindred? Observe the addition "yea and his own life also" (cf. Jo. xii. 25). In a literal sense, remarks Hugo Grotius, hating one's kindred were impious (cf. Mt. xv. 4; Eph. v. 29) and hating one's life is impossible; and His requirement here is a startling paradox designed to arrest His hearers' attention and bring it home to them that His claim is paramount. Even what we love we must hate when it would draw us away from Him; and then we will hate it just because we love it and will not dishonour it by yielding to its hateful importunities and thus desecrating love for love's sake. Discipleship means following the Master, and His road was the *Via Dolorosa*. "Recognise," says He, "what following Me there involves. Ere you embark on the enterprise count the cost, lest you incur disappointment and bring dishonour on the cause and on yourselves."

This warning He enforces by two illustrations (vers. 28-33). To this day it is necessary in the East that a close watch be kept over vineyards and orchards lest they be plundered, and a proprietor builds a watchtower (cf. Mt. xxi. 33), sometimes a mere cage perched on four long poles but generally a veritable tower substantially constructed of hewn stone. It is a costly structure, and ere beginning it he must count the cost. If he began and could not complete it, he would cover himself with ridicule. The unfinished tower would stand a monument of his improvidence, the jest of every passer by. Perhaps our Lord was referring to some notorious case in the vicinity; and His other illustration would be no less practical in that age of frequent insurrection against the overwhelming might of Rome. Two kings go to war, and one finds that he can bring only ten thousand men against the other's twenty thousand. He reckons the chances, and if he concludes that there is no possibility of his winning in the unequal contest, he makes the best terms he may. So says our Lord: "Count the cost of following Me." If they would still have followed Him at all hazards,

He would have rejoiced; but He would have them on no other terms.

Discipleship means an absolute surrender, a readiness to face any sacrifice for the Master's sake. It is not discipleship at all if we follow Him from any other motive than love of Him and devotion to His cause. His disciples are "the salt of the earth," since their presence saves society from corruption. But if they be worldly-minded, they are like insipid salt; and than this there is nothing more useless. It is worse than refuse. It serves neither as soil nor as manure; for not only is there no nourishment in it but it kills vegetation. Cf. exposition of Mt. v. 13 and Mk. ix. 50.

## OUR LORD'S OFFENCE OF LOVING SINNERS

XV. I, 2

1 *Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.*

2 *And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.*

CONTINUING His journey southward our Lord has now reached another station on the route. If the last were indeed Cana, then this might well be Nazareth, some four or five miles farther on; nor does the likelihood lack corroboration. For (1) it is unthinkable that in this His last progress through the towns and villages of Galilee (cf. xiii. 22) He should have passed by the town where He had been brought up, and addressed no final appeal to its people. (2) It was at this crisis when on His way to Jerusalem at the season of the Feast of Tabernacles that He had that unhappy meeting with His "brethren" which St. John records (cf. Jo. vii. 1-9); and it was at Nazareth that they had their dwelling. And (3) His reception here accords with His previous experience of Nazareth, where His treatment exemplified the proverb that "no prophet is accepted in his own country" (cf. iv. 24). See how He was treated now. His brethren, as St. John tells us, voiced the popular sentiment by sneering at Him and deriding His claims; and the rulers watched Him with jealous eyes, ready to find a pretext for accusing Him. But the general hostility defeated its own end by affording Him a precious opportunity. Had He been invited to preach in the synagogue, the outcasts of the town would have been excluded; nor durst they

have approached Him in the open had the reputable townsfolk been gathered about Him. But isolated as He was they were free to approach Him. "Now," says the Evangelist, "there were drawing near unto Him all the publicans and the sinners to listen to Him." And not only did He "receive" them but they in turn "received" or "welcomed" Him. Like Levi at Capernaum (cf. v. 27-32) some prosperous publican had Him home to his table and invited with Him a company of his fellow-outcasts. It was a scandal in the eyes of the Pharisees and the Scribes, and like their *confrères* at Capernaum they intruded into the banquet-hall, as the fashion of the day permitted, and indignantly commented on the shocking scene: "This fellow receiveth sinners and eateth with them!" In truth, though it escaped their notice, it was a still greater marvel, a veritable miracle of grace, that sinners should have received the Holy One.

At Levi's table His answer was that even as it is with the sick that a physician takes to do, so was it fitting that the Saviour should take to do with sinners; and here He meets the charge with three immortal parables which constitute His grand apologia as the Sinners' Friend. They all have to do with "the lost"—a lost beast, a lost coin, and a lost child. And what does "lost" mean in New Testament parlance? Never "doomed to perdition." Whatsoever is "lost" is missed, desired, and eagerly sought; and the word expresses the whole Gospel of divine love and grace. It throbs with redeeming tenderness.

## HIS DEFENCE

### I. THE LOST SHEEP

xv. 3-7

3 *And he spake this parable unto them, saying,*

4 *What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?*

5 *And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.*

6 *And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.*

7 *I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.*

FROM springtime till the setting in of winter the shepherds pastured their flocks in "the wilderness," the lonely moorlands, tending and guarding them by day and gathering them at nightfall in the fold. It was easy for a sheep to go astray; and if one were missing when the shepherd numbered his flock at the home-gathering, then he would leave the rest "in the shelter of the fold" and "hie him to the mountains and seek the wanderer (cf. Mt. xviii. 12) until he found it." To Jewish hearers the parable needed no interpretation; for did not the Scriptures love to speak of God as "the Shepherd of Israel" and of His people as "the sheep of His pasture" (cf. Pss. xxiii, lxxiv. 1, lxxx. 1, c. 3)? It was a familiar image, but our Lord adds a novel tenderness by proclaiming a sinner not, as the Pharisees conceived,

an outcast but a wanderer, the object of the Shepherd's peculiar solicitude.

O Shepherd with the bleeding Feet,  
 Good Shepherd with the pleading Voice,  
 What seekest Thou from hill to hill?  
 Sweet were the valley pastures, sweet  
 The sound of flocks that bleat their joys,  
 And eat and drink at will.  
 Is one worth seeking, when Thou hast of Thine  
 Ninety and nine?

How should I stay My Bleeding Feet,  
 How shall I hush My pleading Voice?  
 I Who chose death and clomb a hill,  
 Accounting gall and wormwood sweet,  
 That hundredfold might bud My joys  
 For love's sake and good will.  
 I seek My one, for all there bide of Mine  
 Ninety and nine.

It is thus that sinners are regarded by God and His angels in Heaven. "Even so there will be joy in Heaven over one repenting sinner rather than over ninety and nine righteous who have no need of repentance." Observe the gentle irony of His distinction between the "righteous" and "sinners." For argument's sake He allows the Pharisees' claim. If they were righteous and had no need of repentance, wherefor should He care for them (cf. v. 31, 32)?



## 2. THE LOST GROAT

xv. 8-10

8 *Either what woman having ten \*pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?*

9 *And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.*

10 *Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.*

IN His parable of the Lost Sheep and the shepherd's quest for the forlorn wanderer, "sick and helpless and ready to die," it is God's compassion for sinners that our Lord proclaims; and now in His parable of the Lost Piece of Silver or, as Bunyan has it, "the Lost Groat" He proclaims this further truth—that every soul which He has made is precious in God's sight and its loss an impoverishment to Him. A "piece of silver" is in the original a *drachma*, a Greek coin corresponding to the Roman *denarius* which appears in our Version as "a penny," and which we rightly apprise when we remember that in our Lord's time it was the ordinary wage for a day's work (cf. Mt. xx. 2). It was thus no inconsiderable sum for a peasant woman—her scanty savings designed perhaps for the rental of her poor habitation, a windowless cottage of the Galilean sort. Thus interpreted the parable is indeed an eloquent proclamation of the truth that a lost sinner is precious to God; but it is an attrac-

\* *Drachma*, here translated *a piece of silver*, is the eighth part of an ounce, which cometh to sevenpence halfpenny, and is equal to the Roman penny, Mt. xviii. 28.

tive suggestion that the piece of silver was no common coin. To this day a Palestinian woman's dearest treasure is her *semadi*—a circlet of silver coins twined round her head and meeting, if it be long enough, on her brow. It is an heirloom descending from mother to daughter, and it would be a poor *semadi* which had but ten pieces. It is as sacred as our wedding ring, and the disappearance of one of the pieces would be not merely a loss but a disgrace.

And the argument of the parable thus interpreted appears when we recall the old theological question whether it was "for His own glory" or "for the welfare of sinners" that God instituted the work of redemption. The answer is that it was for both. In truth it is in the welfare of sinners that God finds His glory. For even as it is the mark of a good workman that he finds his honour in the perfection of his work, so the Creator finds His praise in the perfection of His creatures, and the loss of the meanest of them touches His honour. His creatures are precious in His sight, and if any perish, it is a loss to Him and a diminution of His glory. As "a faithful Creator" (1 Pet. iv. 19) He must needs do for every creature of His hand the best that wisdom and love can devise; and therefore it is written (Ps. cxxxviii. 8): "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever; forsake not the works of Thine own hands,"

## 3. THE LOST SON

XV. 11-32

11 *And he said, A certain man had two sons:*

12 *And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.*

13 *And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.*

14 *And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.*

15 *And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.*

16 *And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.*

17 *And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!*

18 *I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,*

19 *And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.*

20 *And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.*

21 *And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.*

22 *But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:*

23 *And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:*

24 *For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.*

25 *Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing.*

26 *And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.*

27 *And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.*

28 *And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him.*

29 *And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:*

30 *But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.*

31 *And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.*

32 *It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.*

**I**T is an ancient and profound thought, proclaimed by poets and philosophers in all ages and approved by Holy Scripture, that the seen and temporal is an image of the unseen and eternal and every earthly thing has its heavenly counterpart; and our Lord employs it in this golden parable as in many another passage of His teaching. God is the supreme need of the human heart which He has made for Himself and which is restless until it finds rest in Him; and men had always been dreaming and guessing about Him. Philosophers had defined Him as the First Cause of all things, the Absolute, the Infinite, the Eternal; and the prophets had proclaimed Him as King and Lord—the King of kings and the Lord of lords. But our Lord taught His disciples to conceive of Him after a simpler and more gracious fashion. Look, said He, at human fatherhood: that is the earthly

image of the Divine Nature, and the wisdom and strength and tenderness of human fatherhood have in Him their full and perfect counterpart. Think what a human father is at his best: all this and infinitely more and infinitely better is the Heavenly Father. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." Grasp this truth, and not only will you never be afraid of God but you will gladly accept His providential appointments, however hard they may appear, as surely good and wise. If your child asked bread, would you give him a stone? If he asked a fish, would you give him a water-snake? If he asked an egg, would you give him a stinging scorpion? "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more your Heavenly Father!"

On this principle our Lord builds His crowning argument. God is the Heavenly Father, and His love embraces all the children of men. They are all His sons, saints and sinners alike; and the difference is that saints are sons at home with the Father, while sinners are lost sons, sons who have wandered from the Father's house; nay, rather, since all have sinned, saints are sons who were once lost but have now come home, while sinners are lost sons still in the far country but still dear to the Father's heart, still remembered, still mourned and desired. And this truth our Lord teaches by a moving story of a father, a prosperous farmer, and his two sons. Evidently, since there is no mention of her, He would have it understood that their mother was dead; and the father's affection, like Jacob's of old, had twined about the younger. And little wonder, since he was a bright, merry lad fonder of play than work, while, as so frequently happens with children of one family, the elder, though steady, conscientious, and industrious, was selfish and arrogant. As they grew, their dispositions strengthened. There was constant bickering between them until at length the younger could bear it no longer. He would never be



happy at home, and he would fain go abroad and try his fortune. And so he approached his father with a petition. By the Jewish law of birthright he would inherit a third of his father's estate (cf. Dt. xxi. 17); and it was not uncommon for a father advanced in years to disencumber himself of his property by making it over, like King Lear, to his family, reserving only his title to maintenance (cf. *Ecclus.* xxxiii. 19-23). It was thus nothing unreasonable when the younger son proposed that he should receive his portion forthwith; nor is it surprising that his father should have consented, recognising the unsatisfactoriness of the domestic situation and hoping that the lad would prosper abroad. Remembering, however, the wise man's admonition: "Whilst thou yet livest and breath is in thee, give not thyself over to anybody. For better is it that thy children should supplicate thee than that thou shouldest look to the hand of thy sons," he would not denude himself like King Lear but retained possession of the rest of his property. It was no injustice to the elder son, since his inheritance was assured and meanwhile, remaining at home with his father, he would share it, and whatever increase might accrue from his industry he would ultimately possess.

On receiving his portion the younger son "gathered all together" and went abroad. The phrase signifies that he realised the property assigned to him. He sold his share of the land and cattle and went off with the price. "What comes by the water goes with the tide," and he fell into evil company and squandered the wealth which he had got so easily. He would gladly have worked for a livelihood, but that far country was stricken by a famine as so often happens in the East when the harvest fails through drought, and unable to obtain decent employment he was reduced to herding swine, the most loathsome of occupations in Jewish eyes. It was a wretched pittance that he earned, insomuch that he would snatch ravenously at "the husks"—the pods of carob-beans—which the filthy creatures were eating, to



“fill his belly” or, according to some authorities, “be stuffed,” as the coarse word denotes, like a beast with its fodder.

In his wretchedness he remembered the home which he had so light-heartedly abandoned, where the meanest hireling had bread enough and to spare; and he cursed his folly. It was indeed a poor sort of repentance—no shame for his ill-doing, no thought of his father’s sorrow, nothing but a sense of his own wretchedness; and our Lord would teach us here that it matters not what it be that turns a sinner’s heart, if only it turn to God.

Let not conscience make you linger,  
Nor of fitness fondly dream;  
All the fitness He requireth  
Is—to feel your need of him.  
This He gives you:  
'Tis the Spirit’s rising beam.

Once we return He will work in us true repentance and every needed grace. It never entered the prodigal’s imagination that all the while his father was yearning after him. Had he known, he would have hastened home; but, conceiving that his father would be bitter against him, he lingered among the swine until he could endure his misery no longer. “I will up and away to my father!” he cried. He never dreamed of reinstatement. His best hope was that he would crave this poor boon: “I will say, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight; no longer am I worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hirelings.”

He started for home. And see how he was greeted. As he approached, hesitating, ragged, and footsore, his father espied him in the far distance and recognised him; and he “ran.” It is the only place in Holy Scripture where haste is attributed to God. Elsewhere His operations are always gradual, unresting yet unhasting. It took Him unmeasured ages to evolve a world; and He gently matures the harvest

by the daily ministration of the sunshine and the rain—first the seed, then the blade, then the ear, and at length the full grain. And His judgments tarry. He is long-suffering, slow to anger, and of great mercy, unwilling that any should perish. But when sinners turn, then He makes haste. “He ran, and fell on his neck, and” not merely “kissed him” but “kissed him much,” “kissed him fondly,” “covered him with kisses” (cf. vii. 38).

As soon as his lips were free, “Father,” said the lad, preferring his premeditated supplication, “I have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight; no longer am I worthy to be called thy son——” He got no farther. The house-slaves had trooped out of doors and were watching the scene. “Quick!” cried the exultant father. “Bring forth” not “the best robe” but “a robe—the first,” meaning not the first in quality, the best in the house, but, as St. Augustine and others of the ancient interpreters perceived, the robe which he had worn in former days, in Matthew Henry’s quaint phrase, “before he ran his ramble.” No other would serve, and they would well understand. The master had treasured that old garment, and many a time had they seen him handling it fondly and dropping warm tears upon it. It is like the story of Dan’el Peggotty and his little lost Em’ly; “I saw how carefully he adjusted the little room, put a candle ready and the means of lighting it, arranged the bed, and finally took out of a drawer one of her dresses (I remember to have seen her wear it), neatly folded with some other garments, and a bonnet, which he placed upon a chair. There they had been waiting for her many and many a night, no doubt.” The servants would understand. The interval was blotted out and the former days restored. “Bring forth a robe—the one he used to wear, and put it on him; and”—more than that—“give him a ring for his hand.” The wanderer was restored not only to his old place but to his old standing in the home, since the ring was an emblem of honour and dignity (cf. Gen. xli. 42; Esth. iii. 10, viii.

2; Ja. ii. 2). It was the gladdest day that home had ever known, gladder than a birthday, gladder than a marriage-day, and worthier than either of joyous celebration (cf. Mk. vi. 21; Mt. xxii. 2). "Let us eat and be merry (cf. xii. 19); for this my son was dead, and he has come to life again; he was lost, and he is found."

And what of the elder son? Surely he might well have been softened as he reflected on the past and bethought himself how it was his own harshness that had driven his thoughtless brother away. But alas! whatever misgiving he may have felt, he had stifled it, and he had not only hardened his heart against his lost brother but harboured a grudge against his good father. His grievance was that the ne'er-do-well had received his portion while he was denied his and remained a pensioner on his father's bounty. He was out at work on the farm when the prodigal arrived, and on returning at "loosing-time" he heard the merry din; and on learning from one of the servants what was ado he was indignant and would not enter the house. And when his father came out and remonstrated, he poured forth all his pent-up grievance. "Behold," he cried, "all these years I have been slaving for thee, and never transgressed a command of thine!" Yet see how he had been requited. The fatted calf had been dressed to feast that scamp, whereas, he alleges, he had never been given so much as a poor kid to feast his friends. In good truth, churl as he was, he had never had friends to feast; and had he wished, the best in the house was at his disposal. "My child," said the good old father, "thou art ever with me, and all that is mine is thine," answering here his first complaint: "I have been a slave to thee." And then he rebukes that cruel sneer: "This *thy son*!" "It was meet that we should make merry and be glad; for this *thy brother* was dead, and he has come alive; and lost, and he is found."

The parable required no interpretation. The villain of the story was the elder brother, not the prodigal; and those

Pharisees and Scribes who had censured our Lord's receiving sinners and eating with them, would perceive in the elder brother their own portraiture. And surely the rebuke would go home to them.

For, don't you mark? we're made so that we love  
First when we seen them painted, things we have passed  
Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see.

It was indeed a rebuke, yet how gracious it was! We miss half the lesson of the parable unless we observe not merely the father's welcome of the prodigal but his gentle forbearance with the elder brother. "My child!" he remonstrates; "this thy brother." Thus even in proclaiming that the publicans and sinners were lost children of God and precious in His sight, and reproving the Pharisees for their narrow-heartedness, He recognised that both alike were dear to the Heavenly Father and would fain have gathered them all into the Father's House. The Friend of sinners was the Friend of Pharisees too.

## THE USE OF WORLDLY WEALTH

### xvi. 1-13

1 *And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.*

2 *And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.*

3 *Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.*

4 *I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.*

5 *So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?*

6 *And he said, An hundred \*measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.*

7 *Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred †measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.*

8 *And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.*

9 *And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.*

10 *He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.*

\* The word *Batus* in the original containeth nine gallons three quarts: See Ezk. xlv. 10, 11, 14.

† The word here interpreted *a measure* in the original containeth about fourteen bushels and a pottle.



11 *If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous ‡mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?*

12 *And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?*

13 *No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

**H**IS defence of His love for sinners was not the whole of our Lord's discourse at that memorable banquet. When He had thus dealt with the protest of the Pharisees, He addressed Himself, says the Evangelist, to "His" or rather "the disciples," meaning not the Twelve, though they may have been present at the entertainment, since His theme was the use of wealth and they had no need of such counsel. It was those newly won disciples, His host and His fellow-guests, that He addressed. They were "publicans and sinners" (cf. xv. 1, 2); and since the publicans were rich men, it was fitting that He should counsel them how they must employ their wealth now that they were His. He teaches them the lesson by a parable which we shall ill appreciate unless we catch the kindly humour which pervades it. It is the story of a wealthy proprietor who, after the fashion so common in the East, entrusted his estate to a steward or factor (cf. Gen. xxxix. 4-6). Things went badly, and the tenants paid dear for the steward's mismanagement and speculation. At length a complaint reached his lordship "that he" not "had wasted" but "was wasting" or "squandering his goods"; and the knave was called to account and dismissed.

Cast thus upon the world, he pondered his position. "What must I do? To dig," thought he, looking at his delicate hands, "I have not strength; to beg (the same word as in xviii. 35) I am ashamed." Presently a bright idea occurred to him: "I am resolved what to do!" He sum-

‡ Or, *riches*.



moned his lordship's debtors, the tenants whom he had himself been rack-renting and fleecing. "How much," he asked the first, "owest thou unto my lord?" Payments were generally made in kind, and the answer was: "A hundred casks (literally "baths," a bath being about  $8\frac{1}{4}$  gallons) of oil." "Take thy bill," said he, "and, quick!" since there was no time to lose, "sit down and write fifty." Then he interviewed the next: "And how much owest thou?" "A hundred quarters of wheat." "Take thy bill, and, quick! sit down and write eighty." Observe his intention. Posing as the friend of the oppressed tenants, he pretended that he had procured them those large abatements from his lordship; and his idea was that they would gratefully remember the good turn he had done them, and requite him in his need with food and shelter, making here the rogue's wonted blunder of presuming on the simplicity of his intended dupes. Still he knew the men he had to deal with, and put his price on each, allowing one 50 per cent. abatement and another only 20. He was a clever rascal, and when the trick came to his lordship's ears, it amused him. He (observe what is written in ver. 8—"the lord," not "the Lord") "commended the unrighteous steward"; and our Lord explains wherein he merited commendation: "he had done" not "wisely" but "prudently," "providently," "foreseeingly" (cf. Mt. vii. 24, where see exposition), setting herein an example which it were well for good men, "the sons of the light" (cf. 1 Th. v. 5), to emulate by displaying a like providence in the business of Eternity.

And this lesson our Lord inculcates by a precept which is misleadingly rendered in our Version. "Make for yourselves," it should run, "friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when it fails, they may receive" or "welcome you into the Eternal Tents." Observe that phrase "the mammon of unrighteousness." As we have seen (cf. exposition of Mt. vi. 24), "mammon" means simply "wealth" or "riches"; and "the mammon of unrighteous-

ness" or "the unrighteous mammon" (ver. 11 does not mean "ill-gotten gain," "wealth unrighteously acquired," since the only legitimate use thereof is restitution. It is a Hebrew phrase. Thus, when the Psalmist speaks of "the paths of righteousness" (Ps. xxiii. 3), he does not mean the paths where the righteous walk but, according to the Hebrew idiom, paths which perform the office of a path by leading to a destination, unlike the sheep-tracks on the moor which run a little way and then vanish, leading nowhere. And so, when our Lord speaks of "the mammon of unrighteousness," He means worldly wealth which, however useful and pleasant while it lasts, perishes with the using, unlike "the true mammon" (ver. 11), "the treasure in the heavens that faileth not" (cf. xii. 33). At the best it is a transient possession. We cannot take it with us into Eternity. When we pass hence we must leave it behind us; and so our wisdom lies in purchasing with it while we may "the unfailing treasure" which endures unto life eternal. It is only thus that it serves its proper end. And what is "the unfailing treasure"? It is love.

For life, with all it yields of joy and woe,  
And hope and fear,—believe the aged friend,—  
Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love.

And if we employ our worldly possessions in kindly service, ministering as we have opportunity to the needs of our fellows, especially those who are bound to us by the human ties of kinship and society, then we will win their affection; and when we pass hence, they will greet us on the other side and bid us a joyful welcome. And then Eternity will be for us no bleak, untried domain but a homely scene radiant with glad faces and musical with loving voices. It is thus that the prospect grows ever brighter and more alluring, and we are delivered from the tragedy of a loveless and hopeless old age. "Who loves me in heaven? I

am quite alone, child—that is why I had rather stay here,’ says the Baroness in a frightened and rather piteous tone.” And what had the old worldling to stay here for? “‘Everything goes away from us in old age. But I still have my cards—thank heaven, I still have my cards!’” (Thackeray, *Virginians*, Chap. lxxxiii).

Therefore, says our Lord, “make for yourself friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when it fails, they may welcome you into the Eternal Tents.” Observe that phrase “the Eternal Tents,” suggested doubtless by the imminence of the Feast of Tabernacles or Tents. It is an eloquent contradiction in terms. A tent is a frail and fleeting thing, pitched by the traveler at nightfall and struck at break of day when he must fare onward. And so, when He calls Heaven “the Eternal Tents,” our Lord intimates that the Blessed Life will be at once a perfect rest and an endless progress, an ever new beginning, a fuller and ever fuller discovery. Our souls will indeed be satisfied, but they will attain always more of the glory of the Lord and drink always deeper of His inexhaustible grace.

Oh, Christ He is the fountain,  
The deep, sweet well of love!  
The streams on earth I’ve tasted,  
More deep I’ll drink above.  
There to an ocean fulness  
His mercy doth expand,  
And glory, glory dwelleth  
In Immanuel’s land.

Our Lord enlarged upon the parable, and of His interpretation thereof the Evangelist has preserved several pithy apothegms. (1) Faithful in a very little, faithful in much; unrighteous in very little, unrighteous in much (ver. 10). It is told of Mahomet that once his wife Fatima found him settling a quarrel between two sparrows over a grain of rice. “Doth the Prophet of Allah well,” said she, “to be-

stow his time in distributing justice on a matter so slight?" "Know," he answered, "that the sparrows and the grain of rice are creatures of Allah, and justice is a treasure of inestimable price." (2) "If ye have not proved faithful in the unrighteous mammon," that is, the perishing wealth of this world, "who will entrust to you the true stuff?" that is, as the Greek word signifies, the real and abiding wealth whereof worldly wealth is a fleeting shadow (ver. 11). This passing world is a discipline of Eternity. "This world," said Rabbi Jacob, "is like a vestibule before the world to come: prepare thyself in the vestibule that thou mayest be admitted into the banquet-chamber." (3) Faithfulness wins promotion (ver. 12). It is by loyalty to his employers' interests that a subordinate attains to partnership. A good servant will by and by be a master. (4) Impossibility of serving two masters (ver. 13). Here, doubtless in its proper connection, St. Luke gives that saying of our Lord which St. Matthew includes in "the Sermon on the Mount" (cf. Mt. vi. 24, where see exposition).

## PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND THE BEGGAR

xvi. 14-31

14 *And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.*

15 *And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.*

16 *The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.*

17 *And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.*

18 *Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.*

19 *There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:*

20 *And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,*

21 *And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.*

22 *And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;*

23 *And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.*

24 *And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.*

25 *But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.*



26 *And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.*

27 *Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:*

28 *For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.*

29 *Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.*

30 *And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.*

31 *And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.*

THOSE Pharisees who had entered the banquet-hall to spy upon our Lord, had remained after His answer to their protest against His association with sinners and had heard His subsequent lesson on the use of wealth. It cut them to the quick, since their order was notorious for "covetousness," literally "love of money" (cf. Mk. xii. 40); and they "derided Him" or rather "sneered at Him" (the word again rendered "derided" in xxiii. 35 and "mocked" in Gal. vi. 7). They said nothing, but He observed the curl of their lips; and He answered them first by a stinging rebuke of their worldly pride so hateful in God's sight (ver. 15) and then by a solemn parable (vers. 19-31). And what of the intervening verses? They are an awkward interruption of the argument, and manifestly they are an interpolation of a sort which is frequent in the manuscripts of the New Testament. It was the fashion for a careful reader to note illustrations and elucidations on the margin of his manuscript; and these three verses are such comments subsequently imported by copyists into the text. (1) In illustration of our Lord's charge that those sticklers for the Law "justified themselves" or rather "made themselves



out righteous" an early reader quoted His saying about the fulfilment of the Law (ver. 16). Cf. Mt. xi. 12, 13, where see exposition. (2) Lest it should seem that our Lord made light of the Sacred Law he quoted His saying about its permanent value (ver. 17). Cf. Mt. v. 18, where see exposition. (3) St. Paul repeatedly stigmatises fornication as "covetousness"—the coveting of one's neighbour's wife, his most precious possession (cf. 1 Cor. v. 10, 11; Eph. iv. 19, v. 3, 5; Th. iv. 6); and here (ver. 18), in view of the indictment of the Pharisees as "covetous" (cf. ver. 14), our Lord's assertion of the sanctity of marriage is quoted. Cf. Mt. v. 32 and xix. 9, where see exposition.

Thus disembarrassed, our Lord's argument runs smooth and clear. "Ye," says He to the sneering Pharisees, "are they that make themselves out righteous in the sight of God, but God readeth your hearts; for what is high among men is an abomination in the sight of God." And then without pause or interruption He unfolds His parable, at once a solemn warning to the haughty and heartless Pharisees and an enforcement of the lesson which He had just taught His companions at table—the host and his fellow-publicans and sinners—regarding the use of their worldly wealth (cf. ver. 9). Since this is the solitary instance where a parabolic personage bears a name, it has been supposed that it is no mere parable but an actual case, and in the early days a name, Ninevis, was invented for the rich man. But Lazarus—in Hebrew Eleazar—is here not so much a name as a designation, signifying, as it does, "God hath helped" and characterising the beggar—unhelped by man but helped by God.

I. The scene on earth (vers. 19-21). The contrast is sketched by a few graphic touches—the rich man with his robe of royal purple and undergarments of fine linen, "far-ing sumptuously," literally "making merry (cf. xii. 19, xv. 23, 29) glitteringly," an allusion to the gold and silver plate on his table; and the beggar lying, a mass of sores, at his

gateway and watching the revelry with hungry eyes. The wretch was not wholly unbefriended; for the homeless dogs, companions of his misery, would lick his sores with their soft, warm tongues—"the surest sign," says Darwin, "of kind feeling in a dog," and pitying angels hovered over him unseen (cf. Heb. i. 14). Dogs and angels—God's ministers of mercy!

2. The scene in the hereafter (vers. 22-31). They died, and in the sight of the world their obsequies matched their lives; but "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." "It was a brave funeral in the sight of men," says St. Augustine, "that was afforded that purple-clad rich man by the crowd of his retainers; but a far braver in the sight of God that was furnished to that poor man full of sores by the ministry of the angels, who did not carry him forth to a marble tomb but carried him up to Abraham's bosom." Speaking to Jews, our Lord paints the contrast in Jewish colours. When the rich man closed his eyes, he was lying on a soft couch in his gilded mansion; and he opened them amid torments—where? "In Hades" the original has; and Hades—the Hebrew *Sheol*—signified properly "the unseen world." It was thus precisely represented in old English by "hell," which is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *helan*, "hide"; but so overlaid is the word by mediæval accretions that it no longer expresses the scriptural idea and should be eliminated from Christian parlance. Hades was conceived as the common abode of departed souls, good and bad alike, where they received their fitting portions; and the misery of the bad was aggravated by the spectacle of the good enjoying the felicity which they might have shared. That felicity was depicted by Jewish theology under the image of a glad feast presided over by Abraham, the father of the faithful (cf. Mt. viii. 11, 12). At an ancient feast the company reclined on couches about the table, the most honoured guest next the host. Hence the figure of the parable. When the rich man lifted up his

eyes in Hades, he beheld the glad feast but he beheld it only as those strangers who, according to Jewish custom, were admitted as spectators to the festal chamber. He had no place at table; and to his amazement he beheld the beggar who had lain at his gate occupying the place of honour, reclining next to Abraham and leaning back on his bosom in intimate converse, like the beloved disciple on the Master's in the Upper Room (cf. Jo. xiii. 23).

It was a startling reversal, and our Lord vindicates its justice by two principles. (1) The choice which a man makes here, fixes his character, and character is permanent. The rich man had "received his good things." He had set his heart on the things of the world, and his very capacity for higher things had withered through neglect. The world was his sole good, and when it slipped from his grasp, he was left empty and desolate. (2) He was inexcusable. He fancied that if Lazarus were sent to warn his five brothers, they would bethink themselves as, he professes, he would have done had he had timely warning; but in truth, like himself, they already had ample warning. No miracle would convince one who closes his heart against the voice of conscience, which is the pleading of the Holy Spirit. The Jews did not believe when the Lord raised the widow's son at Nain, the daughter of Jairus, and Lazarus of Bethany, nor even when He was Himself raised from the dead according to the Scriptures.

It was not because he was rich and the rich man perished: it was because his riches closed his heart against God. Nor was it because he was poor that Lazarus was saved: it was because, as his name signifies, he had found his help in God. Rich and poor alike are saved by grace.

## PRIVATE INSTRUCTION OF THE TWELVE

xvii. I-10

1 *Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!*

2 *It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.*

3 *Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him: and if he repent, forgive him.*

4 *And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.*

5 *And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.*

6 *And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.*

7 *But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?*

8 *And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?*

9 *Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.*

10 *So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.*

**I**T was our Lord's manner that after discoursing publicly He should privately expound His teaching to the Twelve and deal with difficulties which it presented to their minds

(cf. Mk. iv. 33, 34); and so He does here. Grieved by the ungracious attitude of the Pharisees toward those repentant publicans and sinners, He first of all shows the criminality thereof and warns His disciples to beware of the spirit which prompted it. It was indeed a crime and very heinous in His eyes; and the crime was this—that when sinners were seeking to return to God, instead of encouraging the Pharisees put “offences,” that is, “snares,” “stumbling-blocks,” or “obstacles” (cf. exposition of Mt. v. 29), in their way. And what does He mean when He speaks here of “little ones”? Not merely children but all sorts of feeble folk who have need of help and encouragement. If it was a crime, according to the ancient Law (cf. Lev. xix. 14; Dt. xxvii. 18), to put a stumbling-block before a blind man or make him wander out of the way, it is surely a worse crime to put a stumbling-block before a sinner when he is feebly groping his way back to God; and our Lord here reprobates it in the strongest terms (cf. Mt. xviii. 6, 7). “Better,” He says, “have a millstone hanged about your neck and be thrown into the sea.” Drowning was a common punishment in lawless times. Josephus tells how in the year 38 B.C. the Galileans revolted against Herod and drowned his adherents in the Lake.

The reason why we limit the mercy of God and would keep sinners back from Him is that our own hearts are so unforgiving and we impute a like hardness to Him; and therefore our Lord bids us cultivate a generous spirit toward our fellowmen, an unwearied and inexhaustible readiness to forgive wrongs inflicted on ourselves. It is easy to forgive one wrong, but it is more difficult to forgive when the wrong is repeated; and the Rabbinical rule was that the duty of forgiveness was exhausted by a third offense (cf. Mt. xviii. 21, 22, where see exposition). Our Lord lays down a larger and more generous requirement. “If thy brother sin against thee seven times a day, and seven times turn to thee and say ‘I repent,’ forgive him every



time." He does not mean that seven times is the limit. Seven was the number of completeness, and thus He meant that the duty of forgiveness is inexhaustible.

His admonition went home. The Apostles were conscious how far they were from fulfilling His requirement, and one of them, acting spokesman for the rest, awkwardly ejaculated: "Increase our faith." Their idea was that faith is a gift of God, and if only they were more richly endowed therewith, they would achieve more. It was a poor excuse, and the Master brushed it aside. It was not for lack of faith that they had come short but for lack of good will. If only they would, then, be their faith ever so small, no greater than a grain of mustard seed (cf. Mt. xiii. 31, 32), they would work wonders: "Ye would say unto this sycamine—this mulberry-tree, Be rooted up and be planted in the sea"—a Jewish proverb for the achievement of an impossibility (cf. Mt. xxi. 21).

The bane of religion is self-seeking, the mercenary spirit which serves God for a recompense, oblivious of the infinite debt which we already owe Him and His limitless claim upon our devotion; and this lesson our Lord teaches by a stern parable. A servant, or rather, as it is in the original, a slave, bought with his master's money and therefore absolutely his, returns at "loosing time" from his ploughing or shepherding, weary and hungry; yet ere he may rest or sup, he must spread his master's table and wait upon him. And hereby he earns no thanks; for it is his mere duty. "So also with you," says our Lord: "when ye have done all that is commanded you, say 'We are unprofitable slaves: only what we ought to do have we done.'" We owe God our utmost devotion, and by no service can we ever make Him our debtor.

Is not this a hard saying? It seems to make God out a ruthless tyrant, imputing to Him the fatal spirit of the Bourbons and the Stewarts who in terms of their insolent theory of "the divine right of kings" insisted that whatever



sacrifice a subject made for his sovereign he merely fulfilled an obligation and merited no gratitude. Assuredly it is not thus that our Lord would have us conceive of God; and His intention appears when we understand that He has here in view that mercenary spirit which animated the disciples with their Jewish dream of an earthly kingdom and an earthly recompense—the spirit which prompted Peter on one occasion to adduce their sacrifices for the Master and ask Him “What then shall we have?” (Mt. xix. 27). It was to beat down that spirit in their hearts that He spoke this parable. It defines not God’s attitude toward us but the attitude which we should maintain toward God, realizing how much we owe Him, what an infinite debt, and counting the utmost we can do for Him all too little. Even so was it said of old by Rabbi Simeon the Righteous: “Be not as slaves who serve the master with a view to receiving recompense, but be as slaves who serve the master with no view to receiving recompense; and let the fear of Heaven be upon you”—the spirit of “disinterested love of God” inculcated by the mediæval saints and the mystics. As St. Francis Xavier put it:

Not for the hope of glory or reward,  
But even as Thy self hast loved me, Lord,  
I love thee, and will Love thee and adore,  
Who art my King, my God for evermore.

It is not thus indeed that God feels toward His servants, the Heavenly Father toward His feeble and erring children; but it is thus that they should feel toward Him.

## A GRATEFUL SAMARITAN

xvii. 11-19

11 *And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.*

12 *And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers which stood afar off:*

13 *And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.*

14 *And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.*

15 *And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,*

16 *And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.*

17 *And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?*

18 *There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.*

19 *And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.*

CONTINUING their pilgrimage to Jerusalem, our Lord and the Twelve now approach the Samaritan frontier. "He was traversing the border of Samaria and Galilee." The scene of this incident was "a certain village," evidently on the Galilean side, since the presence of Pharisees (cf. ver. 20) proves that it was a Jewish village. His coming was expected inasmuch as it had been announced by the Seventy (cf. x. 1); and though slighted by the Pharisees, He did not lack a welcome. "There met Him ten men"

says the Evangelist, employing in the original a word which denoted a public ovation (cf. Mt. xxvi. 6; Jo. xii. 13). They were lepers (cf. exposition of Mt. viii. 2-4), and nine of them were Jews and one a despised Samaritan. In health the Jews would have had no dealings with the Samaritan (cf. Jo. iv. 9); but in adversity prejudices are forgotten, and they were banded in a fellowship of misery. Apprised of His coming, they had stationed themselves in pitiful isolation outside the village, and on espying Him they durst not approach Him but they greeted Him from afar with their entreaty: "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." He bade them betake themselves to their respective Temples at Jerusalem and Mount Gerizim (cf. exposition of ix. 51-56) and submit themselves to their priests for examination according to the Law. It was an assurance that on getting there they would be found clean and absolved from the cruel ban. They believed it, and as they went their way, the blessed miracle was wrought. The nine Jews thought only of their deliverance and hastened on to Jerusalem that they might gain their discharge; but though Mount Gerizim was so much nearer and he might have gone thither and speedily returned, the Samaritan immediately retraced his steps with a song of praise on his lips and cast himself at the Lord's feet, pouring out his gratitude. Doubtless the others were grateful too. They would bless the Lord's goodness, and perhaps they meant to seek Him by and by and thank Him for it; but meanwhile their own welfare was their engrossing concern, and their behavior was a sorry contrast to the Samaritan's self-forgetting gratitude. It at once grieved and gladdened our Lord. It was a fresh instance of that "hardness of heart" (cf. Mk. x. 5) which had characterized the Jews all down their history and had foiled His own gracious appeals; but at the same time it was an evidence of the nobler possibilities of that larger world which, no less than Israel, He had come to redeem.

## THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

xvii. 20-37

20 *And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not \*with observation:*

21 *Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is †within you.*

22 *And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it.*

23 *And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them.*

24 *For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.*

25 *But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.*

26 *And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.*

27 *They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.*

28 *Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;*

29 *But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.*

30 *Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.*

31 *In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.*

\* Or, with outward shew.      † Or, among you.

32 *Remember Lot's wife.*

33 *Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.*

34 *I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left.*

35 *Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left.*

36 *\*Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.*

37 *And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.*

**R**ACIAL animosity was naturally strong in a frontier village where Jews and Samaritans continually confronted each other; and the Pharisees resented our Lord's commendation of the grateful Samaritan. They greeted Him with a derisive question. He was the Messiah; and when He appeared thus among them, a weary traveller with no other retinue than His little band of disciples, Galilean peasants like Himself, they mocked His title by inquiring when He would inaugurate His glorious reign. "When cometh the Kingdom of God?" and what was His answer? "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation." Mark that word "observation." It was employed, as a scientific term, of a physician watching the progress of a malady and again of an astronomer scanning the firmament; and thus our Lord here proclaims a truth which every page of history attests—that great happenings are ever noiseless. "When," says the historian of the Dutch Republic, "Philip the Good, in the full blaze of his power, and flushed with the triumphs of territorial aggrandisement, was instituting at Bruges the order of the Golden Fleece, 'to the glory of God, of the blessed Virgin, and of the holy Andrew, patron saint of the Burgundian family,' and enrolling the names of kings and princes who were to be honoured with its sym-

\* This 36th verse is wanting in most of the Greek copies.



bols, at that very moment an obscure citizen of Harlem, one Lorenz Coster, or Lawrence the Sexton, succeeded in printing a little grammar, by means of moveable types. His invention sent no thrill of admiration throughout Christendom, and yet, what was the good Philip of Burgundy, with his Knights of the Golden Fleece, and all their effulgent trumpery, in the eyes of humanity and civilisation, compared with the poor sexton and his wooden types?" And even so was it with the greatest of all happenings. "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say 'Lo, here!' or 'Yonder!' For lo! the Kingdom of God is —" what? "Within you" our Version has, meaning that it is no kingdom of this world ushered in with shouting and tumult, but a gentle and benignant reign of peace and love in the hearts of men. And this is indeed a precious truth, yet it is not the truth which our Lord here proclaims. Rather He says here, as the margin has it, "the Kingdom of God is among you" or "in your midst," meaning that it had already come, if only they had eyes to recognize it. "In the midst of you standeth One whom ye know not" (Jo. i. 26).

Dismissing thus the mocking Pharisees, He turns to the Twelve and in language which was much on His lips in these closing days of His earthly ministry (cf. Mt. xxiv. 23-28, 37-41), He forewarned them of the distress which would ensue upon His departure. Observe that phrase "the days of the Son of Man" (vers. 22, 26). Like the kindred phrases "the day of the Lord" and "the coming of the Lord" it had a double signification (cf. exposition of Mt. x. 23). "The day of the Son of Man" denoted in the first instance the final consummation of the Second Advent (cf. Mt. xxv. 31, xxvi. 64); but every solemn crisis interrupting the orderly process of events and exhibiting His hidden sovereignty was also designated "a day of the Son of Man." There have been many "days of the Son of Man" in the course of the world's troublous history, many a divine interposition putting the wrath of man to confusion and vin-



dicating the cause of justice and truth when it seemed hopelessly worsted; and so, in view of the calamities impending over the turbulent Jewish people, He admonishes His disciples that "days were coming when they would long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and would not see it," when they would cry "Arise, O Lord! let not man prevail; make bare Thine holy arm in the eyes of all the nations." The deliverance would tarry, and when at length it came, it would be a terrible dispensation—that dread judgment which smote impenitent Jerusalem when she fell before the Roman army in the year 70. It was a swift and overwhelming catastrophe like the Flood, like the devastation of the Cities of the Plain (cf. Gen. vii, xix); and He warns His disciples to be prepared and make their escape betimes. Nor was His admonition forgotten. It is recorded that on the eve of the siege the Christians, like Lot of old, quitted the doomed city and found an asylum at Pella to the east of the Jordan (cf. exposition of Mt. xxiv. 15-22).

"Where, Lord?" they asked in bewilderment, and He answered with a proverb: "Where the body is, thither will the eagles also be gathered together" (cf. Mt. xxiv. 28, where see exposition). A camel falls in the desert, and though a moment ago not a speck was visible in the sky, instantly the vultures, those scavengers whose office it is to clear carrion away lest it pollute the air, swoop down upon the carcase. And even so, wherever there is moral corruption, the vultures of God's righteous judgment surely descend. The Canaanites of old defiled the good land with their abominations, and Israel destroyed them; Israel proved faithless, and the Roman eagles devoured her; Rome waxed corrupt, and Alaric, "the Scourge of God," smote her; the nobility of France trampled for generations on her peasantry, and at the Revolution God let loose His vultures on the oppressors. It is a law of the providential order that wrong is doomed. Judgment is sure, and if it tarry, its execution is the more terrible.

## PARABLE OF THE UNRIGHTEOUS JUDGE

xviii. 1-8

1 *And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;*

2 *Saying There was \*in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:*

3 *And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.*

4 *And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;*

5 *Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.*

6 *And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith*

7 *And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?*

8 *I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*

**I**T was indeed a dark prospect that our Lord had set before the Twelve in His discourse on the coming of the Kingdom; and their chief discouragement would be a sense of their impotence. He had told them how they would long for "a day of the Son of Man" and cry for His interposition, but events would run their inexorable course, and they could only stand by and await the predestined issue. It was vain for them either to strive or to pray. What could they do but submit to the inevitable and set themselves to endure with stoical resolution? An attitude of despair is always a mistake; and our Lord shows the Twelve the fallacy of such reasoning. It ignored the fact

\* Gr. *in a certain city.*

(400)

that through all strife and seeming disaster God is working out His beneficent purpose, and is never regardless of His people's longings and entreaties. And this truth our Lord enforces by an *a fortiori* argument. Just as in the kindred parable of the Selfish Neighbor (cf. xi. 5-8) He paints a picture of a selfish man who cares nothing for his suppliant's need, yet for his own sake accedes to his request; and the inference is that much more will the Heavenly Father give ear to the cry of the children whom He loves. Here again we miss the significance of the parable unless we catch the spirit of kindly humour which prevades it.

It is the story of an unrighteous judge of the sort so common in the East where "respect of persons" inclined the scale of justice and a gift blinded the eyes of the wise and perverted the cause of the righteous, according to the adage "Show me the man, and I will show thee the law." The plaintiff here was a poor widow, and since she brought him no gift, the judge would not consider her case; but she would not be thus put off. She kept importuning him, beseeching him, remonstrating with, upbraiding him, more fiercely indignant at each interview, until she made herself a nuisance to him, and worse than a nuisance—a positive menace, since it seemed as though she would proceed to actual violence. Hear his soliloquy: "Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me" or rather "is a bother to me"—the same colloquialism which we find in the parable of the Selfish Neighbour (cf. xi. 7)—"I will avenge her." Why? "Lest," our Version has, "by her continued coming she weary me"; but this is a sorry attenuation of the original, where "weary" is the same word which St. Paul uses when he says (1 Cor. ix. 27) "I *keep under* my body and bring it into subjection" or, as the Revisers have it, "I *buffet* my body and bring it into bondage." It is a boxer's term, signifying quite literally "hit under the eye," "give one a black eye." And here it is a serio-comic touch. The persistence of the unfortunate

litigant was an intolerable annoyance to that corrupt magistrate; and, aware *furens quid femina possit*, he apprehended worse. "Because this widow is a bother to me, I will avenge her, lest she end by coming and taking her fists to me"—in Shakespeare's phrase, "setting her ten commandments in my face." It is seldom that King James's translators were restrained by squeamish propriety, and they might have been admonished here by the example not only of the Latin Vulgate but of their predecessor Wycliffe who, following it, has "leste at the laste sche comynge strangle me," meaning "take me by the throat"—a rendering which at least catches the spirit of the original.

Thus our Lord taught His disciples that "they ought always to pray, and not faint"—"grow weary" or "lose heart," a word which, occurring elsewhere in the New Testament only here, is frequent in the Epistles of St. Paul (cf. 2 Cor. iv. 1, 16; Gal. vi. 9; Eph. iii. 13; 2 Th. iii. 13), and which our Evangelist may have learned from the Apostle, his master and friend. If selfish men are overcome by persistent importunity, will God remain inaccessible to His people's entreaties? This is the argument of the parable; and our Lord closes with a challenge to His disciples' courage and endurance: "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" Though it tarry long, His vindication is sure; and when "the day of the Son of Man" which we so desire comes at last, will it find us calmly resolute or in dark despair?

Right is right, since God is God;  
 And right the day must win.  
 To doubt would be disloyalty,  
 To falter would be sin.

## THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN

xviii. 9-14

9 *And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves \*that they were righteous, and despised others:*

10 *Two men went up into the Temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.*

11 *The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.*

12 *I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.*

13 *And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.*

14 *I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*

IT appears from St. John's narrative (cf. vii. 2) that when our Lord was thus making His last journey to Jerusalem, the Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. Crowds of worshippers were on their way thither, and it was the sight of them that suggested to Him this parable, so peculiarly appropriate after His encounter with the sneering Pharisees. He tells how "two men went up into the Temple to pray." One of them was a Pharisee, and it was nothing strange that he should repair thither on that pious errand; but the other was a publican or taxgatherer (cf. exposition of Mt. ix. 9, 10), and it was indeed a marvel that he should seek the place of prayer. As we have seen, the publicans were social outcasts, and there was a law that if a Jew turned publican,

\* Or, as being righteous.



he should be excommunicated. He might visit the Temple, but he would be admitted on the same terms as an unbelieving Gentile who durst not pass the outer court or approach the Altar and the Sanctuary.

The reputation of sanctity was dear to the Pharisees, and the office of prayer afforded them a welcome opportunity for posing before the admiring multitude (cf. Mt. vi. 5, 6). They offered eighteen prayers daily at stated hours, taking care that each hour as it arrived should find them in some public and frequented place; and they performed their devotions with elaborate ostentation. Standing with the face toward the Holy Place was the prescribed attitude; and if a Pharisee were in the street when the hour arrived, he would halt and pray there; if he were riding an ass, he would dismount and assume the proper posture. The full ceremonial was observed by the Pharisee in the parable. He "stood" or, as the word implies, "struck an attitude." The prayer which his lips actually uttered would be the prescribed formula; but the thought of his heart was his real prayer, and this, the prayer he "prayed with" or rather "unto himself," was a self-gratulation on his superiority to "the rest of men," especially that wretched publican whose presence so aptly illustrated his own shining merit, and a complacent recital of his "works of supererogation"—his fasting, after the fashion of the stricter sort of the Pharisaic order, twice a week, every Monday and Thursday, and not merely on the special occasions when a fast was proclaimed (cf. Mt. vi. 16-18), and his scrupulous tithing of his income (cf. Mt. xxiii. 23)—"all that I" not "possess" but "get" or "acquire." Far different was the bearing of the publican. An awakened sinner, he had gone to the Temple seeking mercy. An outcast from its hallowed fellowship, he "stood afar off" and, guilty before God, he "would not lift up so much as his eyes unto Heaven." Like the Psalmist, "his iniquities had taken hold upon him, so that he was not able to look up." And what was his prayer? It was a humble cry.



Our Version has it: "God be merciful to me a sinner"—a mere aspiration as though he durst not address God. But it was indeed a direct appeal, and not only a direct but a passionate appeal; for in the original it is a supplicating address: "O God, be merciful to me," and not "a sinner" but "the sinner." And what does this mean? It is like the penitential confession of Shakespeare's Enobarbus:

I am alone the villain of the earth  
And feel I am so most.

Even as the Pharisee boasted himself the very exemplar of righteousness, so the publican was, in his own sight, "the chief of sinners."

"O God, be merciful to me, the sinner!" That was the prayer which God accepted; and how better can we pray, poor sinners as we are, the best and the worst of us? It is told of the learned and saintly Hugo Grotius, that "monster of erudition," that, sickening on his homeward voyage from Sweden, he was landed at Rostock and, as he lay a-dying, he was visited by a neighbouring clergyman who, "after discoursing of human frailty, the multifarious sins of mortals, the necessity of repentance thereof, and the infinite mercy of God in forgiving the same for the merits of Christ, and such like wonted considerations for the dying," engaged in prayer. The gracious scholar listened with clasped hands, and on a reference in the prayer to our parable, "I am that publican" he murmured, and therewith he died.

## INCIDENTS AT BETHABARA

xviii. 15-30

15 *And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them.*

16 *But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.*

17 *Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.*

18 *And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?*

19 *And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God.*

20 *Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother.*

21 *And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.*

22 *Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.*

23 *And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.*

24 *And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!*

25 *For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.*

26 *And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved?*

27 *And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.*

28 *Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee.*

29 *And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake,*

30 *Who shall not receive manifold more in his present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.*

**Q**UITTING that frontier village (cf. xvii. 11, 12), our Lord passed into Samaria. His intention was to preach there also in the towns and villages along the route; but, as St. Luke has shown in his preliminary outline of the journey (cf. ix. 51-56), it was frustrated by the hostility of the Samaritan populace, provoked apparently by the passage of troops of Jewish pilgrims to the Feast of Tabernacles. What ensued we have already remarked (see exposition of Mt. xviii. 1, 2). Hastening through Samaria, He arrived at Jerusalem in the midst of the Feast; and there, as St. John records, He remained until after three months' ministry He was driven thence by the menace of the rulers, and retired to Bethabara beyond Jordan, where multitudes gathered about Him. It was here that the incidents before us occurred. Cf. Mt. xix. 13-30 and Mk. x. 13-31, where see exposition.

In St. Luke's report there are two peculiarities which claim notice. (1) Whereas St. Matthew and St. Mark say that "little children" were brought to Him, St. Luke calls them "infants" or "babes," suggesting the mothers who carried them—a characteristic touch, displaying our Evangelist's wonted interest in womenfolk. (2) In the proverb which our Lord quoted (cf. ver. 25), the other Evangelists use the ordinary word for "a needle," signifying literally "a stitcher"; but St. Luke, the physician, has a different word, denoting a surgeon's needle—the sort of needle which he employed in the practice of his profession.

## ON THE ROAD FROM EPHRAIM

### xviii. 31-34

31 *Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.*

32 *For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on:*

33 *And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.*

34 *And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.*

**C**F. Mt. xx. 17-19 and Mk. x. 32-34, where see exposition. Here again, as we have seen, St John elucidates the narrative. After a stay of some two months at Bethabara our Lord, at the call of Martha and Mary, betook Himself to Bethany, where He raised Lazarus; and then, to escape the murderous enmity of the rulers, He retired to the village of Ephraim, adjacent to the Samaritan frontier (Jo. xi. 54). There He remained until it was time for Him to set forth for Jerusalem to keep the Feast of the Passover; and it was on the road which wound among the mountains until it joined the highway from the north, that He made this His third express announcement of His Passion.

## AT JERICHO (xviii. 35-xix. 28)

### I. A BLIND BEGGAR

xviii. 35-43

35 *And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging:*

36 *And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.*

37 *And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.*

38 *And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.*

39 *And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, Thou son of David, have mercy on me.*

40 *And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him,*

41 *Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.*

42 *And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight, thy faith hath saved thee.*

43 *And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.*

**C**F. Mt. xx. 29-34 and Mk. x. 46-52, where see exposition. St. Luke's narrative clears away the confusion which we have noted in those of the other Evangelists, especially by proving clearly that it was not as our Lord was leaving Jericho but as He approached the city that He wrought this miracle.

## 2. ZACCHÆUS THE PUBLICAN

xix. 1-10

1 *And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.*

2 *And, behold, there was a man named Zacchæus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.*

3 *And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.*

4 *And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycomore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.*

3 *And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchæus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.*

6 *And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.*

7 *And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.*

8 *And Zacchæus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.*

9 *And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.*

10 *For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

**H**IS miracle at the northern gate of Jericho excited the wonderment of the spectators, and their acclamations and the sight of the once blind beggar following Him with open eyes and loud thanksgiving drew an ever increasing crowd as He passed along the streets. It was, as the subsequent course of events proves (cf. exposition of Mt. xx. 17-19), Friday evening; and since, according to the Jewish



reckoning of the day from sunset to sunset, the Sabbath was just beginning, He must break His journey and pass the Day of Rest at Jericho. He needed a lodging, yet none of all that applauding throng thought of bidding the weary traveller to his house. There were many who might well have entertained Him; for Jericho was a thriving city. It stood in the midst of a wide and fertile plain with rich groves of palm trees (cf. Dt. xxxiv. 3); and the revenue accruing largely thence employed numerous publicans or taxgatherers.

Among the chief of these was Zacchæus or Zaccai (cf. Ezr. ii. 9), a Jew, as his Hebrew name shows, and therefore doubly odious to his Jewish neighbours. For all his wealth he was a social outcast; but the Holy Spirit, ever breathing like the wind where He listeth, had quickened his soul to a sense of need, and he had heard of "the Friend of publicans and sinners" and would fain meet with Him and perhaps learn from His lips the way of peace. From his desk in the customhouse he heard the noise in the street and, learning the reason, hastened out in the hope of reaching the Saviour; but he could not get near Him for the crowd, nor could he even see Him "because he was little of stature." It was fancied by some ancient interpreters that it was our Lord who was little of stature, and in reproof of the notion the Syriac Version reads "because Zacchæus was little of stature." And surely this is the Evangelist's meaning. A short man, the eager publican could not see over the heads of the crowd; and when he tried to push his way through, he would be jostled and reviled. What could he do? Must he lose the precious opportunity? A happy thought occurred to him. Our Lord was approaching the southern gate, and Zacchæus, familiar with the locality, darted forward and climbed up a sycomore tree which grew by the highway outside the gate. It was a quite different tree from our "sycamore," which is a sort of maple. Since the names are employed interchangeably in the Greek

Version of the Old Testament, the sycomore, literally "fig-mulberry," was doubtless identical with the sycamine (cf. xvii. 6), and it was so designated inasmuch as its fruit resembled the common fig. It was a large tree; for though its trunk was short and easily climbed, its branches spread widely, covering frequently an area of seventy feet in diameter and pleasantly shading the highway beside which on that account it was generally planted. Thus a sycomore-tree served well the purpose which Zacchæus had in view. He perched himself on an overhanging branch and awaited the procession.

The incident had not escaped our Lord. He had marked the rough behaviour of the crowd; He had heard their reviling of the hated publican and caught his name from their lips; and He comprehended his manœuvre. A seeking soul never missed the Saviour's eye; and when He reached the tree, "Zacchæus," said He, "make haste and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house." Observe how much this means. (1) He said not "to-night" but "to-day," the day which had just begun, thus intimating His purpose of staying all the Sabbath with the publican. (2) So large a confidence in his hospitality was not merely a compliment to Zacchæus but an assurance that the Lord had read his heart and was minded to do better for him than he had ever hoped. No wonder he "received (the word which occurs in x. 38 and Ja. ii. 25) Him joyfully." (3) It was at the same time a sharp rebuke to the crowd. They had jostled and hooted the publican; and they were shocked when our Lord proposed to "be guest with him"—the verb elsewhere rendered "lodge" (ix. 12), while the cognate noun is rendered "inn" (ii. 7) and "guest-chamber" (xxii. 11). He overheard their "murmuring," in Wycliffe's Old English phrase their "grucchyng" or, in modern slang, "grousing"; and it was a homethrust to them when He said to Zacchæus: "I must abide at thy house." What else could He

do? He had passed through the city amid acclamations, yet not a door had been opened to Him.

Zacchæus was overjoyed, and he conducted the Lord to his house. And where was it situated? There was scanty space within the area of a walled town, and the wealthier citizens of Jericho had their residences outside the gates on the beautiful plain. It would be there that Zacchæus had his abode; and when he reached it, he "stood" or rather "stood still," "halted" (cf. xviii. 40, xxiv. 17 R.V.), and in the hearing of the curious and ill-judging crowd that had followed thither he addressed the Lord. "Behold," said he, "the half of my property, Lord, I give to the poor; and if I have made any wrongful exaction of any one (the phrase rendered "accuse falsely" in iii. 14, where see exposition), I give it back four-fold." See what this means. It was a vow. First he devoted a half of his honest wealth to charity—a generosity far exceeding the ostentation of the Pharisees (cf. Mt. vi. 2-4) who prided themselves on doubling the tithe and bestowing a fifth in alms. And then he undertook that if any one could show that he had blackmailed him, he would make fourfold restitution, and not merely, as the Law required (cf. Lev. vi. 1-5; Num. v. 6, 7), "the principal" and "the fifth part more thereto." Observe that he does not acknowledge wrongful dealing. If he had done injustice, he had done it unwittingly in the discharge of his difficult business, and he was ready to make full and overflowing amends. It was a truly heroic self-vindication, proving his determination to have done with all that was evil in his past. Which of his critics would have done the like? It gladdened our Lord, justifying His dealing with that poor sinner; and He addressed the crowd. "To-day," said He (not "unto him" but, as several authorities rightly have it, "unto them"), "is salvation come to this house." Though an outcast, the publican was still a Jew, and his faith, so convincingly attested, proved him indeed a son of Abraham, the "father of the faithful."

## 3. PARABLE OF THE POUNDS

xix. 11-27

11 *And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.*

12 *He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.*

13 *And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten \*pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.*

14 *But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.*

15 *And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the †money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.*

16. *Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.*

17 *And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.*

18 *And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.*

19 *And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.*

20 *And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin:*

21 *For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.*

\* *Mina*, here translated a pound, is twelve ounces and a half: which according to five shillings the ounce is three pounds two shillings and sixpence.

† Gr. silver, and so ver. 23.

22 *And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow:*

23 *Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?*

24 *And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds.*

25 *(And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)*

26 *For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.*

27 *But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.*

IT is characteristic that the story of Zacchæus is told by St. Luke alone, who in his diligent researches (cf. i. 1-4) welcomed every example that came to his knowledge of the grace of our Lord, His sympathy with the poor, the oppressed, and the despised. His kindness to the publican of Jericho was an offense to Jewish prejudice, and it is passed over in silence by the Jewish Evangelists, although they tell of His visit to the city and His healing of the blind man at its gate. It is an evidence of the inveteracy of the Jewish prejudice that even St. Luke's narrative is but meagre. He had no difficulty in learning of the scene in the city; but what of our Lord's intercourse with Zacchæus during His sojourn beneath his hospitable roof? This was buried in oblivion, and gladly as he would have told it, no echo of it reached the Evangelist's ears.

One memorial, however, of that memorable Sabbath he has preserved in the parable before us. Our Lord would certainly, "as His custom was" (cf. iv. 16), attend the synagogue, and of course He was invited to address the congregation; and it was probably there that He spoke the parable. From the statement that "as they heard these things, He



added and spake a parable," it might indeed be inferred that He spoke it immediately while still standing at the door of the publican's house; but this is hardly the significance of the Evangelist's language. "As they heard these things" is an indefinite phrase, meaning merely that when He spoke the parable, the words which He had spoken at the door of Zacchæus' house were still ringing in their ears. And no wonder; for to Jewish hearers they were amazing words.

Most probably therefore it was next morning in the synagogue that "He added and spake the parable"; and it was apposite to the situation. He was going up to Jerusalem, and the idea not of the populace alone but of His disciples (cf. Mt. xx. 20-28; Mk. x. 35-45) was that at length He was about to declare Himself the King of Israel and take His throne. And even as He had sought to bring the tragic reality home to His disciples (cf. xviii. 31-34), so now He makes a public protest against that wild and mischievous expectation. There is much similarity between this parable of the Pounds and the parable of the Talents which He spoke to the Twelve the following Wednesday night on Mount Olivet and which St. Matthew alone records (cf. xxv. 14-30); and many interpreters have been disposed to identify them, taking the parable of the Pounds as a somewhat confused version of that of the Talents, combined with another about a king and his rebellious subjects. Were it so, it would be a further evidence of the difficulty which by reason of Jewish prejudice St. Luke experienced in ascertaining what befell at Jericho on that memorable occasion. But surely, whatever ignorance prevailed regarding our Lord's private intercourse with Zacchæus, His public discourse would be no secret. And, moreover, while the parables agree in the fundamental idea of the trust committed to the servants by their absent lord, they exhibit essential differences; and the reason thereof is that they were addressed to different audiences. In the parable of the Talents our Lord resumes the lesson which He had addressed to



His popular audience at Jericho, and applies it to His Apostles, adapting it to their distinctive opportunities and responsibilities. See how this is borne out in the text.

The parable is herein unique that it begins with a distinct local reference. After the death of King Herod the Great in 4 B.C. his son Archelaus (cf. Mt. ii. 22) repaired to Rome that he might present his claim to the succession; and the Jews, exasperated by his father's tyranny and apprehensive of worse at his hands, despatched (not "a message" but) "an embassy" to plead against it. The episode would still be fresh in remembrance after the lapse of a generation, especially at Jericho where Archelaus had left conspicuous memorials in the palace which, with characteristically Herodian addiction to architectural extravagance, he had renovated with costly magnificence, and in the aqueduct which he had constructed for the irrigation of the palm-orchards. That memorable incident our Lord employs by way of illustration in His initial protest against the notion that, since He the Messiah, the prophetic King of Israel, was going up to Jerusalem, "the Kingdom of God should immediately appear." It was not a worldly triumph that awaited Him there but a tragic rejection. He was leaving the world, and only after a long absence would He return and establish His glorious reign; and ere His departure He was committing a sacred trust to His faithful servants.

Observe these significant differences between our parable and that of the Talents. (1) Here we have ten servants, literally "slaves," since the officers of an eastern potentate were always slaves; whereas in the parable of the Talents we have only three, since it applies not to believers generally but to the little circle of the Twelve. (2) For the same reason the trusts differ. A talent was roughly £200, while a "pound" (*mina*)—not a coin but a sum—was 100 *drachmæ*, the word rendered in our Version (cf. xv. 8) "pieces of silver." A *mina* was worth some £3 10 s.; and Wycliffe styles it here, in terms of the currency of his day,

a bezant. The disparity of the trusts fitly represents the difference in respect of gifts and opportunities between the Apostles and the mass of believers. (3) Since ability is the measure of opportunity (cf. Mt. xxv. 15) and faithfulness the measure of merit, it is written that the ten slaves, representing the indiscriminate mass of believers who stand in respect of ability on the same commonplace level, were entrusted each alike with one bezant, and were rewarded according to their faithfulness. They all had the same opportunity, but they differed in faithfulness and they were rewarded accordingly. One multiplied his bezant tenfold, and he was made governor of ten towns; another multiplied his fivefold, and he was made governor of five—a truly royal requital of devotion to a small trust. And what, on the other hand, was the reckoning where the abilities and consequently the trusts differed? Here also faithfulness was the measure of merit; and the same reward was given to the man who had been entrusted with five talents and had gained other five, and to his neighbour who less in ability, had been entrusted with only two yet, showing equal faithfulness, had gained other two. In the one case the principle is *a lesser reward for lesser faithfulness with like opportunity*; in the other *a like reward for like faithfulness with lesser opportunity*. (4) The duty of all was the same: "Occupy till I come" or rather "while I am coming," "pending my return," or, as Wycliffe has it, "marchaundise yee while I come." "Occupy" is old English for "trade," "do business," and so the word is rendered presently (ver. 15): "that he might know how much each man had gained by trading" or, in Wycliffe's quaint phrase, "that he schulde wite how myche each had wonnen by chaf-farynge." The duty was the same, but observe the motive of the defaulter in either case. In the parable of the Talents it was jealousy—that odious vice of ambitious mediocrity in the higher arenas of human activity. The man with but a single talent, aggrieved at the larger endowment

of his fellows, let his own lie idle, sullenly refusing to play his part in the game. In the other case it was indolence. There was no jealousy, since all were equally endowed; but where so little was at stake, the game seemed hardly worth playing. It is not a little remarkable that only one of the ten proved a defaulter, our Lord thus recognising the general faithfulness of His humble servants. He does not go through the list. He specifies only two by way of example, showing how they differed in achievement; and then He says (ver. 20) "and another" or rather "the other," "the different sort," indicating that he stood alone. After the manner of his kind he put the blame on his lord, insolently charging him with austerity and greed; but the actual reason was his own indolence, and he unwittingly betrays himself when he produces his bezant wrapped up in a napkin. For what was the use of a napkin, a *sudarium*, literally "a sweat-cloth," but to wipe from his brow the sweat of honest toil? His indolence was dishonesty, as indolence always is. He indeed restored his trust, yet he had robbed his lord by letting it lie idle.

As in the parable of the Talents, the neglected trust was committed to the servant who had acquitted himself best. "Take the bezant away from him," said the king to his attendant officers, "and give it to him who hath the ten bezants"—the faithful slave who stood by proudly displaying the fruit of his industry. It was not given him as a reward; for he had already his reward in his governorship of the ten towns. Rather was it given him as a fresh trust on the principle that faithfulness always brings a further opportunity (see exposition of Mt. xxv. 28, 29). He had proved himself the fittest to repair the defaulter's neglect. But what of the ensuing interjection (ver. 25)? It may have been the king's attendants who raised the objection, surprised at their lord's decision; or it may have been our Lord's hearers, who had been following the story with eager interest. But a difficulty remains in either case, inasmuch

as, whoever they may have been, they misconceived the situation, supposing that the ten bezants belonged to the faithful servant and had been given him as his reward, whereas they belonged to his lord who had given him an incomparably richer reward in the governorship of ten towns. The difficulty disappears when we observe that the verse is omitted by numerous authorities and is most probably a blundering interpolation.

And what of the ruthless decree wherewith the parable closes (ver. 27)? It seems an unhappy ending, but in truth it has a gracious purpose and most fitly closes the parable. For it is an admonition of the disaster which the Jewish people were courting by their wild dream of the Messiah as a national deliverer, and which actually befell in the year 70 when Jerusalem was beleaguered by the Roman army and paid the terrible price of her inveterate turbulence (cf. vers. 41-44).

THE PASSION WEEK

xix. 28-xxiii





## ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

xix. 28-48

28 *And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem.*

29 *And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples.*

30 *Saying, Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither.*

31 *And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him.*

32 *And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them.*

33 *And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt?*

34 *And they said, The Lord hath need of him.*

35 *And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they sat Jesus thereon.*

36 *And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way.*

37 *And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen;*

38 *Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.*

39 *And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.*

40 *And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.*

41 *And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it.*

42 *Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.*

43 *For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,*

44 *And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.*

45 *And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought;*

46 *Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves.*

47 *And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him,*

48 *And could not find what they might do: for all the people *\*were* very attentive to hear him.*

**S**EE exposition of Mt. xxi. 1-22 and Mk. xi. 1-19. The Sabbath ended at six o'clock in the evening; but since it was a distance of some fifteen miles from Jericho to Jerusalem, our Lord would pass the night at the house of Zachæus and resume His journey next morning. His disciples accompanied Him, but they did not after their wont walk beside Him, holding pleasant converse with Him. "He went on before" (cf. Mk. x. 32). His discourse in the synagogue, portending an issue so diverse from their Jewish expectation and the solemnity of His look and bearing as He approached the scene of His dread conflict cast an awe upon them, and they followed after Him, questioning among themselves what it might mean.

Observe two additions which St. Luke makes to the common narrative. (1) Several of the Pharisees, always vigi-

*\* Or, hanged upon him.*

lant in their surveillance on our Lord, had joined the multitude and, resenting the enthusiasm but powerless to prevent it, they remonstrated with Him on what they were pleased to regard as unseemly behaviour at the holy season. "Teacher," said they (ver. 39), "rebuke thy disciples, that," adds the ancient Syriac Version, "they shout not." Not without disdain He answered: "Should these hold their peace, the stones will cry out." It was a proverbial phrase (cf. Hab. ii. 11). The classics talk of stones speaking or weeping at a moving appeal. Had the Pharisees realized what was happening in their midst in those days, they too would have shouted. (2) St. Luke alone records the moving incident of our Lord's elegy over Jerusalem (vers. 41-44). As He crossed the summit of the mountain and rode down its western slope, beyond the Kidron ravine the ancient city, dear and sacred to every Jewish heart, stood peaceful and beautiful in the light of the April morning, unconscious of the doom which awaited her. Tears filled His eyes and a lament broke from His lips. O that she had "recognised the reason of her visitation"—her "merciful visitation," as the word signifies (cf. 1 Pet. ii. 12; Mt. xxv. 36, 43; Lk. i. 68, 78, vii. 16). Even yet it was not too late; for He had come to address to her a final appeal. But alas! she would remain obdurate, and He depicts the inevitable issue of her besiegement by the Roman army, employing the imagery of the ancient scriptures (cf. Is. xxix. 3; Ps. cxxxvii. 7-9).

## DISPUTATIONS IN THE TEMPLE-COURT

XX. I-44

1 *And it came to pass, that on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes came upon him with the elders,*

2 *And spake unto him, saying, Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority?*

3 *And he answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing; and answer me:*

4 *The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?*

5 *And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him not?*

6 *But and if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet.*

7 *And they answered, that they could not tell whence it was.*

8 *And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.*

9 *Then began he to speak to the people this parable; A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time.*

10 *And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty.*

11 *And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated him shamefully, and sent him away empty.*

12 *And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast him out.*

13 *Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him.*

14 *But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among*

*themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be our's.*

15 *So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them?*

16 *He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid.*

17 *And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?*

18 *Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.*

19 *And the chief priests and the scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.*

20 *And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor.*

21 *And they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God \*truly:*

22 *Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæsar, or no?*

23 *But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me?*

24 *Shew me a †penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Cæsar's.*

25 *And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's, and unto God the things which be God's.*

26 *And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace.*

27 *Then came to him certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection; and they asked him,*

28 *Saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.*

\* Or, of a truth. † See Mt. xviii. 28.



29 *There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and died without children.*

30 *And the second took her to wife, and he died childless.*

31 *And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also: and they left no children, and died.*

32 *Last of all the woman died also.*

33 *Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife.*

34 *And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage:*

35 *But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:*

36 *Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.*

37 *Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.*

38 *For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.*

39 *Then certain of the scribes answering said, Master, thou hast well said.*

40 *And after that they durst not ask him any question at all.*

41 *And he said unto them, How say they that Christ is David's son?*

42 *And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,*

43 *Till I make thine enemies thy footstool.*

44 *David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his son?*

**C**F. Mt. xxi. 23-27, 33-46, xxii. 15-33, 41-46 and Mk. xi. 27-xii. 27, 35-37, where see exposition. Only in his report of the parable of the Vinedressers has St. Luke contributed any note-worthy addition to the parallel narratives.

(1) Observe that in vers. 15-17 he, like St. Mark (xii. 9), represents our Lord as Himself answering His question "What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do?" whereas,



according to St. Matthew (xxi. 41), the answer came from His audience: "They say unto Him." On the other hand, after the stern sentence pronounced on the husbandmen St. Luke introduces an energetic protest from the audience: "When they heard it, they said, God forbid"—that phrase so frequently employed by St. Paul in repudiating an untenable suggestion: "Away with the idea!" "Perish the thought!" literally "Be it not so." Evidently the former interruption came from the people who had witnessed the encounter and after their wont followed the parable with breathless interest. When our Lord put His rhetorical question "What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do?" they impulsively answered it for Him. Probably they did not perceive the drift of the argument, but the rulers perceived it, and it was from them that the protest came: "Away with the idea!"

(2) The intervention of the rulers afforded our Lord an opportunity of bringing their guilt home to them; and it was to them, especially the Scribes, that He quoted that testimony from their reversed Scriptures (ver. 17). Here St. Luke adds that epigrammatic application thereof, which inferior authorities have interpolated in the text of St. Matthew (xxi. 44): "Every one that falleth on that stone shall be broken to pieces; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" or rather "scatter him like chaff," literally "winnow him." Our Lord has just shown the Scribes by that quotation from the Scriptures that in rejecting Him they were fighting against God's providential purpose; and here He pronounces this a suicidal attitude. His argument is like Bishop Butler's, where he demonstrates that the same sort of difficulties which are found in Revealed Religion are found also in the constitution of Nature. Hence to quarrel with the former because of these is to quarrel with the latter. And Nature crushes the man who opposes her laws.

## AN IMPRESSIVE CONTRAST

xx. 45-xxi. 4

45 *Then in the audience of all the people he said unto his disciples,*

46 *Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts;*

47 *Which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation.*

1 *And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury.*

2 *And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two \*mites.*

3 *And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all:*

4 *For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.*

**L**IKE St. Mark (xii. 38-44, where see exposition) St. Luke here collocates two independent passages for the sake of the contrast which they present. One is a fragment of the indictment which our Lord hurled against the Scribes at the close of the long controversy in the Temple-court and which St. Matthew has fully recorded (cf. xxiii, where see exposition). It was natural that our Evangelist should thus curtail that scathing denunciation, since he was writing for Gentiles unfamiliar with the Jewish parties and their animosities; but he has incorporated other fragments of it with his report of our Lord's discourse at that unhappy

\* See Mk. xii. 42.

entertainment in the house of a Pharisee (cf. xi. 39-52). The other passage is the story of the Widow's Farthing. And the reason of the combination is the contrast thus presented between the rapacious Scribes who "devoured widows' houses and for a pretence made long prayers," thus incurring not "greater damnation" but "more overflowing condemnation," and our Lord's gracious appreciation of that poor widow's devotion.

## DISCOURSE ON THINGS TO COME

xxi. 5-38

5 *And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said,*

6 *As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.*

7 *And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?*

8 *And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; \*and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.*

9 *But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by.*

10 *Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:*

11 *And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.*

12 *But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake.*

13 *And it shall turn to you for a testimony.*

14 *Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer:*

15 *For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.*

16 *And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren,*

\*Or, and, The time.

and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.

17 *And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.*

18 *But there shall not an hair of your head perish.*

19 *In your patience possess ye your souls.*

20 *And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.*

21 *Then let them which are in Judæa flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.*

22 *For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.*

23 *But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.*

24 *And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*

25 *And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;*

26 *Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.*

27 *And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.*

28 *And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.*

29 *And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees;*

30 *When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.*

31 *So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.*

32 *Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.*

33 *Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.*

34 *And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.*

35 *For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.*

36 *Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.*

37 *And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives.*

38 *And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.*

**C**F. Mt. xxiv and Mk. xiii, where see exposition. Observe that in ver. 19 "patience" should rather be "endurance" and "possess" should be "acquire" or "win"; and even so there remains a double uncertainty. (1) The manuscripts vary between the imperat., "win ye," making the verse an admonition, and the fut., "ye shall win," making it a promise. The latter reading is the more strongly attested. (2) Since the Greek word for "soul" signifies also "life," it is a question whether the verse should run "In your endurance ye shall win your souls" or "ye shall win your lives." In the former case it is like that other word of our Lord "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved" (Mk. xiii. 13); and so it is a warning against weak apostasy from the faith. But in view of the preceding verse where our Lord assures His disciples that "not a hair of their head shall perish," the latter rendering is more appropriate: "In your endurance ye shall win your lives." What though they be put to death (cf. ver. 16)? "Death is the gate of life"—a larger, fuller, and nobler life; and by losing their lives they would win them. Again, where the Jewish Evangelists (Mt. xxiv. 15 and Mk. xiii. 14, where see exposition) speak in familiar Jewish phrase of "the abomination of desolation," St. Luke (ver. 20) expresses the idea in terms intelligible to his Gentile readers.



## THE TRAITOR'S BARGAIN

xxii. 1-6

1 *Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover.*

2 *And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people.*

3 *Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve.*

4 *And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them.*

5 *And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money.*

6 *And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them \*in the absence of the multitude.*

CF. Mt. xxvi. 1-5, 14-16 and Mk. xiv. 1, 2, 10, 11, where see exposition. 1. The word "passover" had three uses: (1) the whole feast occupying the sacred week (cf. ii. 41; Jo. ii. 13, 23, vi. 4); (2) the Paschal Supper (cf. vers. 1, 8, 11, 13, 15); and (3) the paschal lamb (ver. 7; Mk. xiv. 12). 2. The Chief Priests, that is, the acting Chief Priest and the Chief Priests *emeriti* (cf. exposition of Mt. xxi. 23), and the Scribes or Rabbis, the learned order of the Pharisees, represented the court of the Sanhedrin. 3. The traitor approached the Chief Priests because they, like the rest of the order of the Sadducees, were our Lord's bitterest enemies. At the interview they were supported by the Captains (ver. 4). These were the officers of the Levitical corps charged with the preservation of order in the precincts and environs of the Temple (cf. ver. 52), and

\* Or, *without tumult.*

they were naturally present when an arrest was in question. 4. For "in the absence of the multitude" (ver. 6) read "without a multitude" or "crowd"—"lest," as St. Matthew explains (xxvi. 5), "there should be an uproar among the people."

## THE LAST SUPPER

xxii. 7-20

7 *Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the pass-over must be killed.*

8 *And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat.*

9 *And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?*

10 *And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in.*

11 *And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?*

12 *And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready.*

13 *And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.*

14 *And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.*

15 *And he said unto them, \*With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:*

16 *For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.*

17 *And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:*

18 *For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.*

19 *And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.*

20 *Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.*

\* Or, I have heartily desired.

**C**F. Mt. xxvi. 17-29 and Mk. xiv. 12-25, where see exposition. 1. St. Luke alone mentions that the two disciples deputed to make ready the Supper were Peter and John. 2. He alone also records that preliminary incident—the drinking of a cup of wine and the solemn announcement wherewith our Lord accompanied it (vers. 15-18). The custom was that the Supper should begin with the drinking of a cup of wine—the first of four cups which were drunk in the course of the celebration. As soon as the company had taken their places at the table the master of the house filled his own cup from the mixing-bowl and then passed the latter round that the others might fill theirs. Our Lord observed this usage. First of all He expressed His gladness that the privilege had been granted them of meeting thus. He had been looking forward to it, “eagerly desiring to eat that Passover with them ere He suffered,” since it was the last He would eat with them on earth. And then, according to usage, He “took” or rather “received” not “the cup” but “a cup.” Peter and John in fulfilment of their office (cf. ver. 8) were serving the table, and one of them now handed Him a cup. He filled it and, passing on the bowl, “Take this,” said He, “and apportion it among yourselves.” It was here that He made that cheering intimation which St. Matthew and St. Mark, making no mention of this preliminary cup, introduce in connection with the last cup, “the cup of blessing,” which He invested with sacramental significance as an abiding memorial of His sacrificial blood (cf. Mt. xxvi. 29; Mk. xiv. 25). It was the last time He would meet with them at an earthly table, but they would meet again at the Heavenly Feast whereof the Passover was a foreshadowing. 3. For “the New Testament in My blood” (ver. 20) read “the New Covenant sealed with My blood.” A Covenant was always ratified by a sacrifice (cf. Ex. xxiv. 4-8; Ps. l. 5).

## CONVERSATION AT THE TABLE

xxii. 21-38

21 *But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.*

22 *And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!*

23 *And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.*

24 *And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.*

25 *And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors,*

26 *But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.*

27 *For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.*

28 *Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.*

29 *And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;*

30 *That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

31 *And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:*

32 *But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.*

33 *And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.*

34 *And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.*

35 *And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.*

36 *Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.*

37 *For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.*

38 *And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.*

**C**F. Mt. xxvi. 21-25, 31-35 and Mk. xv. 18-21, 27-31, where see exposition. The institution of the Sacrament (vers. 19, 20) came at the close of the Supper; for according to the Jewish usage the eating of the roasted flesh of the lamb was the Supper proper, and nothing remained thereafter but the drinking of the last cup, "the cup of blessing." And so St. Paul expressly states (1 Cor. xi. 25) that it was "after supper" that our Lord took the cup. Hence it appears that St. Luke after relating the central incident of the sacramental institution here goes back and recounts a series of incidents which occurred earlier in the course of the celebration.

1. The announcement of the Betrayal (vers. 21-23). His purpose here, as St. John has clearly shown (cf. xiii. 21-35), was to compel Judas to withdraw by intimating to him that the Master was cognisant of his treachery.

2. Discourse on true greatness (vers. 24-30). This incident, as St. John shows (cf. xiii. 1-20), preceded the announcement of the Betrayal. The "strife" or "contention" had arisen among the Twelve as they entered the Upper Room, evidently over the question which of them should perform the menial office of the feet-washing; and our Lord rebuked them by Himself performing it. Here St. Luke reports something of His discourse on that occasion. It was the fashion in the East then as it had long been that



princes and other eminent personages should be awarded the honorific title of "Benefactors" for distinguished service; and our Lord here (ver. 25) treats it with disdain. The truly honourable title is not "benefactor" but "servant." He was among them "as he that doth serve"; and if they followed His example herein, even as, He generously recognises, they had hitherto "continued with Him in His (not "temptations," but) "trials" then and only then would they share the glory of His Kingdom.

3. Prediction of Peter's denial (vers. 31-34). Observe the occasion. That they might be prepared for it, our Lord had just forewarned the disciples of the ordeal which awaited them that night at His arrest, when they would be scattered like a crowd of frightened sheep; and Peter, ever confident, had asserted that, though the others might fail Him, he never would (cf. Mt. xxvi. 31-33; Mk. xiv. 27-29). "Simon, Simon," He remonstrated, giving him his old name as He was wont when He would gently rebuke him (cf. Mt. xvii. 25; Mk. xiv. 37; Jo. xxi. 15-17), "Satan hath laid claim to you all, that he may sift you as wheat (cf. Am. ix. 9)," thus reiterating His announcement of the impending trial of their faith. "But," He adds, at once intimating that Peter, confident as he was, would stand it worst of all and bidding him in no wise despair in his hour of shame, "I have made supplication for thee, that thy faith may not fail; and thou, when by and by thou hast rallied, confirm thou thy brethren." Still confident, Peter asseverated his devotion, his readiness to go with the Master to prison and to death, sharing to the uttermost in the conflict which, as he conceived in his Jewish fashion, would prelude the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom. And then our Lord told him the shameful truth.

4. The idea of armed resistance (35-38). It grieved our Lord that the eleven should still be clinging to their Jewish notion of an earthly kingdom and a national deliverance to be achieved by violence; and here He makes another attempt

to disabuse their minds. First He recalls the terms of their apostolic commission when He had sent them forth "without purse or wallet, as sheep in the midst of wolves" (cf. Mt. x. 9, 10, 16). Had it not proved the right way? They assented. "But now," says He, "he that hath a purse, let him take it, likewise also a wallet; and he that hath no sword, let him sell his mantle and buy one." It was gentle irony. They had proved the wisdom of the way of peace, and would they now abandon it and follow the way of violence—now when they were confronted by the issue which the Scriptures had foretold, which He had contemplated from the first, and whereof He had continually admonished them? "For," says He, "this that is written must be accomplished in Me, 'He was reckoned with transgressors' (Is. liii. 12). Yes, My destiny is having its accomplishment." They missed His meaning, taking Him literally; and two of them—Peter being one (cf. vers. 49, 50; Jo. xviii. 10)—produced two "swords." Whence had they procured these? It may be that in view of the menacing situation they had them concealed beneath their mantles despite the law which prohibited the carrying of weapons on the day of the Passover. But the word in the original signified not only a short sword, a "dagger" or "dirk," but a large knife employed for the slaughter of a sacrificial victim and the carving of its flesh. Such knives were used as weapons in an emergency, and it may be, as St. Chrysostom fancies, that these were nothing else than the knives which Peter and John had employed in the dressing of the lamb for the Supper; though the Lord's command to Peter in Gethsemane (cf. Jo. xviii. 11) "Put up thy sword in the sheath" seems rather to suggest that they were proper swords. The dullness of His disciples disappointed the Master. Nothing but stern experience would bring the truth home to them. "It is enough!" said He, dismissing the matter.

## THE AGONY IN GETHSEMANE

xxii. 39-46

39 *And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.*

40 *And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.*

41 *And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed.*

42 *Saying, Father, if thou be \*willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.*

43 *And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.*

44 *And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*

45 *And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow,*

46 *And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.*

**C**F. Mt. xxvi. 30, 36-46 and Mk. xiv. 26, 32-42, where see exposition. Here alone (vers. 43, 44) occurs that story of our Lord's "agony and bloody sweat," so moving and so enshrined in the literature of devotion that discussion of it seems almost sacrilege. Yet true reverence requires consideration of the questions which it presents; and this especially must be observed—that on manuscript evidence, as our Revisers have noted, the passage is no part of the original text of our Gospel but a later addition. It by no means follows, however, that it is a mere fiction; for, like

\* Gr. *willing to remove.*

(443)

not a few precious passages interpolated in the sacred narrative, it is unquestionably an authentic fragment of the evangelic tradition noted by a devout reader of early days on the margin of his Gospel and thence imported by copyists into the body of the text. It proves how prevalent the story was and how surely believed that it is similarly interpolated in some texts of St. Matthew's Gospel (after xxvi. 39). The passage is not one marginal note but two combined.

1. "There appeared (literally "was seen") unto Him" or, according to several authorities, simply "was seen (omitting "unto Him") an angel from heaven, strengthening Him." Who witnessed the visitation and told of it afterwards? The eleven had accompanied Him to Gethsemane, and St. Matthew and St. Mark tell that on getting there He retired with His three intimates, Peter and James and John, into the depth of the orchard. Yet even they were not beside Him in His anguish; for it is written that ere He kneeled down and prayed "He went forward a little," "about a stone's cast," and moreover, when He returned, they were asleep. But they were not alone on the tragic scene. Young John Mark, the future Evangelist, in his linen robe had followed the Lord and the eleven to Gethsemane (cf. Mk. xiv. 51, 52, where see exposition); and it may well be that it was he whom the heavy eyes of the three descried in the dim light bending over the prostrate Master, and in their bewilderment they took him for a white-robed angel ministering to Him. And so the story went abroad: "There was seen an angel from heaven, strengthening Him."

2. "And being in an agony," more literally "having fallen into agony, He prayed more intensely. And His sweat became as it were great drops of blood descending upon the ground." (1) "Agony" is not a translation but merely a transliteration of the Greek word (*agonia*), and its acquired signification is here misleading. An *agon* was a "contest," being the word rendered in our Version "conflict" (Ph. i. 30; Col. ii. 1), "contention" (1 Th. ii. 2), "fight" (2 Tim.

iv. 7), and "race" (Heb. xii. 1); and *agonia* denotes the combatant's perturbation in view of the struggle. And so, when it is written that our Lord "fell into agony," the meaning is that the horror of the impending ordeal rose before Him and, like a martyr when he sees the stake and the faggots, He shuddered at it. "He prayed more intensely," and His cry was "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from Me." (2) The sweating of blood, however rare, is an authenticated phenomenon, exemplified by the case of Charles IX of France, who "suffered from a relaxation of the capillary vessels, which occasioned hæmorrhage of the skin"; and it was taken as a judgment for the blood shed in the massacre of St. Bartholomew when in his mortal sickness "his body was covered with a reddish perspiration, and from the end of each finger hung a drop of blood." It is indeed conceivable that our Lord's dread anguish should have forced blood from His pores; but observe what is written: "His sweat was *as it were* great drops of blood," meaning that the sweat poured from His brow like blood from a wound.



## THE ARREST

xxii. 47-53

47 *And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him.*

48 *But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?*

49 *When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?*

50 *And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.*

51 *And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.*

52 *Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves?*

53 *When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.*

**C**F. Mt. xxvi. 47-56 and Mk. xiv. 43-52, where see exposition. All the Evangelists relate the desperate assault of one of the disciples—Peter, as St. John mentions (cf. xviii. 10, 26)—on the Chief Priest's "slave"; but though his narrative is briefer than the others, St. Luke adds two striking circumstances. (1) It was the slave's *right* ear that was mutilated—a touch of verisimilitude, since Peter attacked him from behind while he and the rest of the officers were surrounding the prisoner. The stroke was aimed at his head, and it was naturally to the right that the sword swerved. The word for "ear" in the other Evangelists is a diminutive—"little ear," "earlet," meaning that it



was merely the lobe that was severed. It is the ordinary word that St. Luke uses when he says that "his right ear" was struck off; but presently when he tells how Jesus "touched" or "grasped his ear," it is the diminutive. (2) He alone records the miracle, but observe how irresistible is its circumstantial attestation. It is plain that something happened, else the rash assailant would have been struck down by the armed guard. And see how vividly St. Luke shows what it was that befell. When the assault was made, our Lord's captors were binding His hands; and he wrested them free, exclaiming not "Suffer ye thus far" but "Let go—just thus far," and grasped the mutilated ear, replacing the lobe that was dangling by a thread. It was His timely intervention that saved Peter.

## THE PRECOGNITION

xxii. 54-65

54 *Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off.*

55 *And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were sat down together, Peter sat down among them.*

56 *But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.*

57 *And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.*

58 *And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.*

59 *And about the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilæan.*

60 *And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.*

61 *And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.*

62 *And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.*

63 *And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him.*

64 *And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee?*

65 *And many other things blasphemously spake they against him.*

**C**F. Mt. xxvi. 57, 58, 69-75 and Mk. xiv. 53, 54, 66-72, where see exposition. Observe how St. Luke, anticipating St. John's more explicit statement, elucidates the compressed narratives of St. Matthew and St. Mark by dis-

criminating between our Lord's preliminary examination (vers. 54-62) and His formal trial by the Sanhedrin (vers. 66-71). It is the former that is here narrated. The scene was "the High Priest's house," that is, the residence of Annas (cf. Jo. xviii. 13), the Chief Priest *emeritus*, situated on Mount Olivet near Gethsemane. Nothing is recorded here of the examination, since it was conducted privately within doors; but the Evangelist tells what happened meanwhile in the open courtyard, where the guards awaited its conclusion in company with the servants of the house who were all astir that night.

It is an evidence of Peter's devotion that, liable though he was to reprisals for his assault on the Chief Priest's slave, he yet followed the Master and made his way into the courtyard. It was there that his courage failed him when the idle guards and servants, observing his nervousness, took to baiting him. Observe the dramatic *dénouement* of the story. Wild with terror, he was vociferating his denial and the courtyard was echoing with his blasphemies (cf. Mt. xxvi. 74; Mk. xiv. 71), when the prisoner was conducted forth. He heard it all, but He said never a word. He only "turned and looked upon Peter." The recreant caught sight of the reverted face, so reproachful yet so pitiful. Only a look, but it pierced his heart. "The Lord turned and looked upon Peter. And Peter went out and wept bitterly." "Good," says St. Ambrose, "are tears which wash a fault away. It is they whom Jesus looks upon that mourn. Peter denied the first time, and he did not weep, because the Lord had not looked upon him. He denied a second time: he did not weep, because still the Lord had not looked upon him. He denied a third time: Jesus looked upon him, and he wept bitterly. Look upon us, Lord Jesus, that we may know how to beweepe sin, to wash misdeed away."

"I took," wrote F. W. Robertson in one of his later letters, "the 'Leonardo'"—a copy of that exquisite Face of our Lord which adorns the Cathedral of Antwerp—"up to

my room some weeks ago, on a Sunday night. The next morning I awoke tired, and felt inclined to dawdle away my time in bed; but that calm, dignified look, bent down from my mantelpiece, absolutely rebuked me, and made it impossible."

"There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us."

It was after His trial and condemnation by the Sanhedrin (cf. Mt. xxvi. 67, 68; Mk. xiv. 65) that our Lord was mocked by His guards (vers. 63-65); and St. Luke has put the shameful story here by way of contrast. His friend denied Him and His enemies mocked Him; but His friend wept and was forgiven.

## THE TRIAL BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN

xxii. 66-71

66 *And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying,*

67 *Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe:*

68 *And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go.*

69 *Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.*

70 *Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am.*

71 *And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.*

**C**F. Mt. xxvi. 59-68 and Mk. xiv. 55-65, where see explanation. Read (ver. 66) "there was assembled the Presbytery of the People, both the Chief Priest and the Scribes; and they (His accusers) led Him away to their Sanhedrin." Observe how St. Luke here defines the supreme Jewish court. First he styles it "the Presbytery" or "Estate of the Elders (cf. Ac. xxii. 5) of the People"; and then he names its leaders, "the Chief Priests," representing the Sadducees, and "the Scribes," representing the Pharisees. The procedure had been decided at the precognition before Annas, and nothing now remained but to carry it out. The question was whether He claimed to be the Messiah; and when, recognising that defence was useless, He not merely acknowledged it but admonished His judges of the day when the situation would be reversed and they would be arraigned before His throne, the case terminated and He was pronounced guilty of the capital crime of blasphemy.

Emperor. They were perilous charges, and they all had a show of reason. For was not our Lord the hero of the multitude, and as such suspect under an alien tyranny as "a pestilent fellow and a mover of sedition" (Ac. xxiv. 5)? Moreover, though only the other day He had deftly evaded an ensnaring question regarding the payment of tribute (cf. xx. 19-26), was there not a Zealot among His followers (cf. vi. 15)? And then in claiming to be the Messiah, the King of Israel, did He not, according to the prevailing idea, challenge the imperial supremacy? It was indeed a shameless and unscrupulous indictment. So oblivious were those Priests and Scribes of faith and patriotism that to compass their wicked end they feigned devotion to the heathen oppressor and alleged the Hope of Israel as a crime.

Observe how clearly the Gentile Evangelist, exempt from Jewish prejudice, exhibits the reluctance of the unhappy governor to acquiesce in the condemnation of our Lord. He not merely pronounced Him innocent but made repeated attempts to evade the hateful necessity of yielding to the clamour of His prosecutors; and one of these, and not the least striking, is recorded by St. Luke alone (vers. 7-12). Residing, save when official duties brought him into their midst, at Cæsarea, the Roman capital of the Province, and holding the Jews and their doings in bitter contempt, Pilate knew nothing of the prisoner. Sedition was indeed rife among that turbulent race; but when he looked at Him, so gentle and peaceful, so unlike a reckless desperado, the charge seemed to him on the face of it preposterous. "Thou," he exclaimed, for the pronoun is thus emphatic in the original, "art thou 'the King of the Jews'?" And so, to justify the charge, the prosecutors informed him of the prisoner's antecedents: "He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judæa"—meaning, as in iv. 44 (see exposition), not the district of Judæa but the country of the Jews, all the Holy Land, a distinction which our Version marks by translating "Jewry"—"beginning from Galilee." Here the gov-



ernor saw his opportunity. If the prisoner was a Galilean, He was a subject of Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, and the decision lay with him; and the case might easily be referred to him, since he was then in Jerusalem, attending the Passover. It was indeed a happy solution, since not merely would Pilate thereby rid himself of his immediate embarrassment but by so courteous a recognition of Herod's rights he would smooth his relations with the Tetrarch, exasperated as these were by the recent massacre of a company of his people in the court of the Temple (cf. xiii. 1) and many another highhanded aggression.

Thus far the device succeeded. Herod had long been troubled about our Lord (cf. ix. 7-9, xiii. 31-33), and he was delighted when the prisoner was presented to him at his official residence at Jerusalem, the old palace of the Asmonæans. He quickly satisfied himself that the superstitious apprehension which had troubled him ever since his murder of the Baptist, was baseless; and, aggravated by the merited disdain wherewith our Lord confronted him, he resorted to the coward's weapon of insult. He handed Him over to his bodyguard, and the rude soldiers arrayed Him in a regal robe of their master's and derided His Messianic claim. And then, to Pilate's chagrin, He was sent back to the Prætorium in His mock splendour. It is an attestation of this narrative of St. Luke that the royal vestment thus procured is by and by mentioned by the other Evangelists (cf. Mt. xxvii. 28; Mk. xv. 17; Jo. xix. 2).

## THE CRUCIFIXION

xxiii. 26-49

26 *And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.*

27 *And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.*

28 *But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.*

29 *For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.*

30 *Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.*

31 *For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?*

32 *And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death.*

33 *And when they were come to the place, which is called \*Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.*

34 *Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.*

35 *And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.*

36 *And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,*

37 *And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.*

38 *And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.*

\* Or, *The place of a skull.*

(456)

39 *And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.*

40 *But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?*

41 *And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.*

42 *And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.*

43 *And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*

44 *And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the \*earth until the ninth hour.*

45 *And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.*

46 *And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.*

47 *Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.*

48 *And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned.*

49 *And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.*

**C**F. Mt. xxvii. 31-56 and Mk. xv. 20-41, where see exposition. St. Luke's additions to the common record are here exceedingly precious; and, like most of the incidents which he has rescued from oblivion, they exemplify the grace of our Lord.

1. The story of the multitude of women, who, mingling with the coarse rabble which, after the manner of their kind, followed the victims to Calvary to feast their eyes on the ghastly spectacle, bewailed and lamented Him (vers. 27-31). These were not the women who had accompanied Him from Galilee (cf. ver. 49) but "daughters of Jerusalem"; and their behaviour was truly courageous, since though the rabble

\* Or, *land*.

might jeer and hoot at criminals on the way to execution, there was a law prohibiting expressions of sympathy. Their kindness was sweet to our Lord, yet He bade them refrain, and that for a double reason: first, that He would not have them incur the displeasure of the rulers, and still more, that He recognised how much more they needed sympathy than Himself. In those dark days of His final rejection by Jerusalem He had ever before His mind the terrible tragedy toward which she was hastening; and it smote His heart when He thought how the children of those kind women would suffer at the grim reckoning. Had they known it, instead of pitying Him they would have been praying that they might die childless (cf. xi. 27). "For," He reasoned, "if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" It was a proverbial phrase, and its force here is that His crucifixion on a frivolous charge of sedition was a premonition of the awful vengeance which Rome would at last wreak on the rebellious nation.

2. Our Lord's prayer for His executioners (ver. 34): "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." It was especially for the soldiers, His executioners, that He thus prayed, as they were nailing His tortured hands to the cross-beam. Indeed they "knew not what they were doing"; for in their eyes He was merely a rebel against the Emperor, and in crucifying Him they were doing their appointed duty at their officer's command. Yet according to the ancient Law even "a sin of ignorance" required an atoning sacrifice; and they needed forgiveness, since, ignorant as they were of our Lord's character and claims, they were sinning against the instincts of humanity.

It is a fresh exemplification of the happy providence which has preserved so many precious memorials of our Lord, that on manuscript evidence this moving sentence is no part of the original text of our Gospel. It is, like xxii. 43, 44, a later interpolation; yet it is indubitably an authentic fragment of the evangelic tradition. "Few verses of the Gos-

pels," is the verdict of Westcott and Hort in the Appendix to their monumental edition of the Greek Testament, "bear in themselves a surer witness to the truth of what they record than this first of the Words from the Cross."

3. The Penitent Brigand (vers. 39-43). The incident is dismissed by St. Matthew and St. Mark in a brief sentence, telling how, when the cruel work was done and the Victim was raised on the cross, He was derided by His exultant enemies, the Chief Priests and the Scribes, and both His fellow-sufferers echoed their taunts. St. Luke alone relates how one of the latter presently relented and turned to Him in penitence. Had they known it, the other Evangelists would surely have told the blessed story; and the question is whence St. Luke derived his information. Refer to St. John's narrative, and observe what is written there. It appears that the Beloved Disciple, who with Peter had followed the prisoner to the house of Annas, followed Him thence to the Prætorium and watched the proceedings there. He heard the sentence, and saw the Master led away to Calvary with His cross on His back (cf. Jo. xix. 17); but he did not immediately follow Him thither. It would seem that he hastened away to report the fatal issue to Mary and her three friends who were anxiously awaiting the tidings at their lodging in the city; and when they insisted, he escorted them to the tragic scene. The pitiless work had just been done when the sorrowful company arrived, and they pushed their way through the throng till they reached the cross. Observe the Evangelist's language here (ver. 25): "Now there stood," more precisely "had taken their stand by the cross of Jesus His mother and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas and Mary the Magdalene." Our Lord marked their presence, and it was then that He commended Mary to John's care. Evidently she was overcome by emotion, and John conveyed her from the distressful scene; for it is written that "from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home" (ver. 27).



It was after his withdrawal on this pitiful errand that the brigand, touched by the spectacle, relented and rebuked his brutal comrade for his persistent "railing," literally "blaspheming." And who was there then to witness the incident and recount it afterwards? The Beloved Disciple was gone and Mary with him; but her three companions remained—her sister Salome, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary the Magdalene. And it would be from their lips that St. Luke heard the story—another instance of that gracious sympathy of his with despised womenfolk which procured him so many precious reminiscences unrecorded by the Jewish Evangelists.

Observe the penitent's remonstrance: "Dost thou not even fear God?" "In the man whose childhood has known caresses," says George Eliot, "there is always a fibre of memory that can be touched to gentle issues"; and what tender memories may not his fellow-sufferer's solicitude for His mother have stirred in the heart of that poor criminal, revealing to him the misery of a wasted life and bringing his guilt home to him? He turned to our Lord with a prayer. What did he know of Him? Rumours of His doings must occasionally have reached his ears, and he had before his eyes the inscription which proclaimed Him "the King of the Jews," and being himself a Jew he would understand what this meant. "Jesus," he prayed according to the best authorities, "remember me when Thou comest in Thy Kingdom." It was the cry of a dark, ignorant soul; yet it was a cry of need and of faith however feeble, and it won an overflowing response. "Verily I tell thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." It was Jewish phraseology such as the suppliant could understand. For in the Rabbinical theology Paradise was the highest of the Seven Heavens (cf. 2 Cor. xii. 4), where "dwelt the Great Glory"; and thus the Lord's promise was that when the poor sinner's soul left his tortured body, it would be with His in God's presence and in God's keeping. Their destinies were thence-



forth linked. Where his Saviour was, there would the sinner be.

There is a beautiful legend that the two brigands—Dumachus and Titus by name—were now elderly men, and they had three and thirty years ago encountered Joseph and Mary as they were fleeing from Bethlehem to Egypt with the Holy Child. Dumachus would have plundered them, but Titus prevented him. The sight of the Babe in His mother's arms moved his compassion, and he took Him tenderly in his own. "O blessed Child," he prayed, "if ever a day shall come for having mercy on me, then remember me, and forget not this day."

## THE BURIAL

xxiii. 50-56

50 *And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and he was a good man, and a just:*

51 *(The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathæa, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God.*

52 *This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.*

53 *And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid.*

54 *And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.*

55 *And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid.*

56 *And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.*

**C**F. Mt. xxvii. 57-61 and Mk. xv. 42-47, where see exposition. Observe how careful St. Luke is to exonerate Joseph of complicity in our Lord's condemnation. He was a "councillor," that is, a member of the Sanhedrin, yet he had not "consented to" rather "voted for their counsel and action." The experience of his colleague Nicodemus on an earlier occasion when feeling was less bitter (cf. Jo. vii. 50-52), shows how unavailing it would have been for him to protest; and since the decision had been unanimous (cf. Mk. xiv. 64), it would seem that he had absented himself from the Sanhedrin that morning. In ver. 54 read "it was the Day of Preparation," and observe that this does

not mean the day of preparation for the Paschal Supper. It was, as it still is in the Greek Calendar, the regular name for our Friday, the weekly day of preparation for the Sabbath, "the day before the Sabbath" as St. Mark explains it (cf. xv. 42). And so St. Luke also explains it here when he adds "and the Sabbath was drawing on," literally "the light of the Sabbath was breaking" (the word rendered "began to dawn" in Mt. xxviii. 1). The new day began at sunset, and it was ushered in by the brightening of the west and the kindling of the stars.

## THE RESURRECTION

xxiv. 1-49

1 *Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.*

2 *And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.*

3 *And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.*

4 *And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold two men stood by them in shining garments.*

5 *And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye \*the living among the dead?*

6 *He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,*

7 *Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.*

8 *And they remembered his words,*

9 *And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.*

10 *It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles.*

11 *And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.*

12 *Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.*

13 *And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs.*

\* Or, him that liveth.

14 *And they talked together of all these things which had happened.*

15 *And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.*

16 *But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.*

17 *And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?*

18 *And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?*

19 *And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people:*

20 *And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.*

21 *But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done.*

22 *Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished which were early at the sepulchre;*

23 *And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive.*

24 *And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.*

25 *Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:*

26 *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?*

27 *And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.*

28 *And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further.*

29 *But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.*

30 *And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.*

31 *And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he \*vanished out of their sight.*

32 *And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?*

33 *And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,*

34 *Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.*

35 *And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.*

36 *And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and said unto them, Peace be unto you.*

37 *But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.*

38 *And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?*

39 *Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.*

40 *And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet.*

41 *And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?*

42 *And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb.*

43 *And he took it, and did eat before them.*

44 *And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.*

45 *Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,*

46 *And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:*

\*Or, ceased to be seen of them.



47 *And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*

48 *And ye are witnesses of these things.*

49 *And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.*

Cf. Mt. xxviii and Mk. xvi, where see exposition. Like both his predecessors St. Luke presents that invaluable testimony to the historic truth of the Resurrection—the vague rumours which passed abroad among the first generation of believers regarding the manifestations of the Risen Lord vouchsafed to chosen witnesses who, while proclaiming the momentous fact that He had indeed arisen and they had seen Him, maintained a studious and inevitable reticence regarding experiences so ineffable, according to His unwritten admonition: “My mystery is for Me and the sons of My house.” As we have seen, it was reserved chiefly for St. John to lift the veil and display the transcendent wonder; and it is instructive to observe how we have here the popular rumours, vague and loose, of the incidents which the Beloved Apostle, an eye-witness thereof, afterwards presented in their majestic reality, testifying simply what he had seen and heard. Cf. (1) vers. 1–12 (where ver. 12 is lacking in the best manuscripts, being an interpolation from Jo. xx. 4–6) with Jo. xx. 1–18, and (2) vers. 36–49 with Jo. xx. 19–29, xxi. 1–23. And observe in vers. 39, 41–43 that crude popular notion which St. Paul repudiates when he shows (1 Cor. xv. 42–50) how the resurrection-body which “inherits the Kingdom of God” is not “flesh and blood,” not an “animal” or “earthly body” but a “spiritual” or “heavenly body.”

St. Luke, however, was not content merely to repeat the popular versions of those ineffable manifestations. His endeavour in “drawing up a treatise,” as he puts it in his Preface (i. 1–4), “on the deeds which have been fulfilled among us,” was to ascertain the testimonies of “those who

from the beginning served as eye-witnesses and attendants of the Word"; and it would be peculiarly difficult for him to elicit such information as he desired. For he was a Gentile, and, so far as the record goes, he paid his first visit to the Holy Land in the year 57 when he accompanied St. Paul to Jerusalem at the close of his third mission and saw his master arrested and imprisoned for two years at Cæsarea. The men who "had been with Jesus" were all Jews, and they would be slow to confide in one who was not only himself a Gentile but the devoted friend of the Apostle of the Gentiles. Yet he succeeded in obtaining one precious testimony—the story of the Risen Lord's manifestation to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus as included here (vers. 13–35) in his narrative, where amid his gleanings of the popular talk it shines like a purple patch on a mantle of hodge-ven grey. It is well to take account of the conspicuous difference; for when we see beside it what was fancied about the Resurrection, then we are very sure that here we have no fancy but the sacred and unimaginable reality.

Emmaus was a village seven or eight miles south-west of Jerusalem. And these two disciples belonged to the undistinguished multitude of ordinary believers. One of them was called Cleopas, the abbreviated form of Cleopatrus, and the other is unnamed. Various conjectures have been made regarding him. One, as old as the early third century, is that he was Simon Peter, an idea which rests on a variant reading (ver. 34) which construes "saying" not with "the eleven and them that were with them" but with the preceding "they": "they (Cleopas and his companion) returned, saying that the Lord had appeared to Simon." Another is that he was Nathanael. A third, later but more attractive, is that he was St. Luke, who thus introduces himself in cryptic fashion; but it disproves the idea that, on his own showing, our Evangelist had never known the Lord in the days of His flesh (cf. i. 1–4). Since they dwelt together at Emmaus like Simon and Andrew at Bethsaida, it may be that they

were two young brothers; and the name of Cleopas is mentioned simply because it was he that told St. Luke the story.

They had been at Jerusalem attending the Passover, and they had witnessed the tragedy. Like all our Lord's disciples, even the Twelve, they had been expecting a far different issue, and it seemed the ruin of their hope and a mockery of their faith. They did not at once set out for home, since Emmaus was over "a Sabbath Day's journey" from Jerusalem. "They rested the Sabbath Day according to the commandment" (cf. xxiii. 56), and on the morrow, the First Day of the week, they took their departure. Ere setting out they heard the astonishing story of the women's visit to the sepulchre and their vision of angels who said that the Lord was alive; but though his companion was disposed to think there might be something in it, Cleopas like every one else (cf. ver. 11) scouted it as "idle talk"—another of St. Luke's professional phrases, being the medical term for the raving of delirium.

As they journeyed, they were discussing the situation, somewhat hotly; and in the midst of their altercation a voice broke in: "What are these arguments which ye are bandying with one another as ye walk?" "And," adds the Evangelist, according to the true text, "they halted with gloomy faces (the phrase rendered "of a sad countenance" in Mt. vi. 16)," ashamed and resentful at being thus caught. Observe what happened. The body which our Lord had brought from the sepulchre was indeed the body which He had worn in the days of His flesh; but it was that body transfigured, no longer a corruptible body but clothed with immortality, a spiritual body fitted for that Kingdom which "flesh and blood cannot inherit." Spirit is ever imperceptible by physical sense; and that a spiritual manifestation may be vouchsafed to the children of men, it must needs be either that the spiritual be accommodated to the limitations of the physical or that the physical sense be so quickened as to perceive the spiritual. Of the former miracle the supreme,

indeed the solitary example is the Incarnation, when "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory." And the latter is exemplified in the manifestations of the Risen and Glorified Lord. He was invisible to the physical eye and inaudible to the physical ear; and only when the veil was taken from their hearts could His disciples perceive Him. This is the indefinable miracle which was wrought in every instance according to the testimony of the Evangelists. See how it happened with those two on the road to Emmaus. They heard no footstep and saw no one approaching, till the veil was lifted, and then they saw One walking by their side and heard His voice. Yet even then they did not know Him. "Their eyes were holden," says the Evangelist, "that they should not well recognise Him." And what wonder? If by reason of the change which time has wrought one scarce recognises a friend after long years of separation, is it strange that they did not recognise the Master in His transfigured humanity?

They took Him for a stranger. "What are these arguments," said He, "that ye are bandying with one another as ye walk?" For a moment "they halted with gloomy faces"; and then, recovering from his surprise, Cleopas answered, somewhat rudely in his resentment of the intrusion: "Hast thou been sojourning all alone at Jerusalem that thou hast not learned the things which happened therein in these days?" "What manner of things?" the stranger inquired; and thereupon ensued a sharp encounter between the two. "They said unto Him" writes the Evangelist, meaning that each bore his part in what follows. And their parts are clearly distinguishable. First Cleopas told his despairing story. "All about Jesus the Nazarene," said he, "who was a prophet right powerful in work and word in the sight of God and all the people, and how our Chief Priests and Rulers delivered Him to sentence of death and crucified Him. Our hope was that it was He that should redeem Israel; but for all that this is the third day since it



happened." "Yes," interposed his comrade, "but some women belonging to us astonished us. They went early in the morning to the sepulchre and found not His body, and they came saying that they had actually seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. And some of our company went off to the sepulchre and found it even as the women had said." "But," retorted Cleopas, "Him they did not see." "Ah, witless men (the same word as in Gal. iii. 1, 3)," cried the stranger, "and slow of heart at putting faith on all that the Prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Christ (the Messiah) should suffer these things and enter into His glory?" And then He quoted passage after passage from the Scriptures, interpreting each and showing how it had found its fulfilment in the events which seemed to them so dark.

Thus engaged they travelled slowly, and it was evening ere they reached Emmaus. "He made as though He would go farther, but," says the Evangelist, "they constrained Him"—the word which he employs again (cf. Ac. xvi. 15) of Lydia's hospitable importuning of Paul and his companions, Luke himself being one of these, and which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. "Abide," said they, or, as the word signifies, "lodge," "stay the night (cf. xix. 5) with us." At supper came the *éclaircissement*. He was their guest, yet as though He had been the host "He took the bread and blessed and brake, and handed (the word translated "delivered" in iv. 17) it to them." And then they recognised Him. What was the token? It was not that He had done the like at the table in the Upper Room; for the two had not been there. It was rather that this was His manner of blessing every meal, and ere now they had eaten with Him and His gracious benediction revealed Him to them. "Their eyes were opened, and they recognised Him."

He did not stay to receive their joyful greeting. "He vanished out of their sight" says the Evangelist, and the

phrase is very significant. It is literally "He became unmanifest from them"; and so it is written conversely (Ac. x. 40): "Him God raised up the third day, and shewed Him openly," literally "gave Him to become manifest." Here is the miracle of our Glorified Lord's manifestation to His chosen witnesses. First the veil of sense was lifted, and "He became manifest unto them"; then the veil fell, and "He became unmanifest." He did not depart. He was still with them according to His promise (Mt. xxviii. 20): "Lo, I am with you all the days even unto the consummation of the age"; but the veil of sense had closed about them, and He was hidden from them.

It would seem that vers. 44-48 are an echo of the Lord's converse with His disciples on the occasion of His manifestation to them by the Lake of Galilee (cf. Jo. xxi)—that memorable occasion which He had anticipated in the Upper Room (cf. Mt. xxvi. 32; Mk. xiv. 28). Observe His injunction: "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." It is the theme of Bunyan's moving discourse *The Jerusalem Sinner Saved; or, Good News for the Vilest of Men*. "One would a-thought," says he, "since the Jerusalem sinners were the worst and greatest sinners, Christ's greatest enemies, and those that not only despised His person, doctrine, and miracles, but that, a little before, had had their hands up to the elbows in His heart's blood, that He should rather have said, Go into all the world, and preach repentance and remission of sins among all nations; and, *after* that, offer the same to Jerusalem; yea, it had been infinite grace if He had said so. But what grace is this, or what name shall we give it, when He commands that this repentance and remission of sins, which is designed to be preached in all nations, should first be offered to Jerusalem; in the first place to the worst of sinners!"



## THE ASCENSION

xxiv. 50-53

50 *And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.*

51 *And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven*

52 *And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy:*

53 *And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.*

IT is an evidence of the difficulty which St. Luke experienced in obtaining information regarding the manifestations of the Risen Lord that he seems to have conceived them as all occurring on a single day. Observe how he marks their sequence (vers. 13, 33, 36). But betwixt the completion of his Gospel and the writing of its sequel, the Book of Acts, he ascertained the fact, and he begins the latter by expressly stating (i. 3) that they extended over a space of forty days. The scene of the Ascension was "Bethany," which signifies here (cf. Mt. xxi. 17, where see exposition) not the village of Lazarus but the district covering the summit and western slope of Mount Olivet (cf. Ac. i. 12). It was there that Gethsemane was situated; and probably that place of hallowed memories was the scene of His farewell. Observe that in ver. 51 the clause "and was carried up into heaven" is lacking in the best manuscripts. The true reading is simply "He was parted from them." And presently in the Book of Acts (i. 9) St. Luke

describes what befell in significant and suggestive language: "As they were looking, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight," literally "caught Him away from their eyes." The veil of sense, lifted for a season, re-enfolded them. It was as though a cloud had descended and hidden Him from their view.







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